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EDITORIAL

PERIODICAL PLURALISM

The recent mercy killing of *Saturday Review*, after fifty-eight years of publication, prompts regret but no great surprise. As it happens, at about the same time *SR*'s death was announced, we received two letters relating to survival in the journalistic jungle that hit closer to home.

The first was from James Weinstein, editor of that indispensable socialist periodical *In These Times*, reporting the magazine's "most serious financial crisis to date." Writes Weinstein, in a request for contributions: "Without your help, we will join Braniff, the A & P and International Harvester on the dustheap of the Reagan recession."

The other letter was from one of our favorite contributors and muckrakers, Jessica (Decca) Mitford, who writes that she treasures publications like *In These Times*, *Working Papers* and *The Nation*, but wishes "that there could be some sort of consolidation of left-wing publications for (a) a striving for excellence in content and (b) hope of survival economically—getting out of the financial quicksands they are now in."

We might be tempted to try Mitford's plan if she could first persuade conservative journals like *National Review*, *The Public Interest*, *Human Events*, *Conservative Digest* and *Commentary* to merge. Seriously, how would Mitford like to collaborate on her next book with Robert Sherrill, Seymour Hersh, Fred Cook and other investigative journalists? Such a book sounds great, but would it ever get written?

Rather than strive for the economies of concentration (we need more than one telephone company for our variegated messages), left-wing journalism should emulate the profligacy of nature: let a thousand flowers bloom. No, Decca; send your money to *In These Times*, and we urge others to do likewise. (The address is 1509 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60622.)

NANCY'S SECRET DIARY
Richard Lingeman

JORDAN: AFTER WEST BEIRUT
Milton Viorst

CUSSING OUT WHITE LIBERALS
Randall Kennedy

THE ACID RAIN WAR
Robert Sherrill

DISARMAMENT AT THE U.N.
Susan Jaffe

HISTORY OF HOUSEWORK
Jacqueline Jones

POST-REAGANOMICS

THE ECONOMY SIGNALS A LEFT TURN

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

In the unmerry month of May, President Reagan chatted with a group of Pennsylvania farmers, afflicted like their brethren with high interest rates and low farm prices. The President instructed them to buck up: "We've come a long way. We've accomplished a lot in a very short time, and this is no time to turn back. What we need now is the courage to stay on course."

Reagan was quite right. Reaganomics works. In less than two years, murderously high interest rates, in alliance with the alarming prospect of escalating deficits generated by reckless tax cuts and soaring Pentagon budgets, have propelled unemployment to heights unprecedented since 1940. Nearly half the nation's black teen-agers walk the streets. In states like Michigan and cities like Detroit and Flint, the label of choice is depression. How else can one justly acknowledge unemployment rates of 20 percent?

Before he became a best-selling author, John Ehrlichman operated as an enforcer in the Nixon White House. His legendary challenge to almost any proposal was "How will it play in Peoria?" For the inhabitants of that conservative community in 1982, Reaganomics is a collection of sour notes. Peoria's largest employer, Caterpillar, laid off workers—8,000 men and women in the last two years—for the first time in two decades. Local unemployment rose above 13 percent.

Venerable Americans uneasily recall the 1930s. Suddenly, their children and grandchildren listen with new interest to their tales of the Great Depression. Now, as then, small businesses are going broke in droves, banks are foreclosing on farm and home mortgages, cor-

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LETTERS.

WALLACE ON VIETNAM NUMBERS

New York City

In his letter to *The Nation* [Aug.7-14], Lieut. Gen. Daniel O. Graham makes a number of specious assertions concerning the CBS News documentary "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception."

First, the general says he agreed to be interviewed only after receiving a guarantee from me that CBS would air his on-camera remarks setting forth his contention that MACV estimates of enemy strength in 1967 and 1968 were not *too low* but *too high*. Graham, of course, is one of the officers at the heart of the controversy over intelligence reporting during the Vietnam War that was chronicled in "The Uncounted Enemy." I am not addressing the question of Graham's role in these matters. I simply want to make it clear that what he wrote to *The Nation* about my supposed guarantee is untrue.

Graham refers to an agreement made during a telephone conversation he had with CBS producer George Crile and myself. The general told us he would be pleased to do an interview with us and asked only that we, in the course of the interview, allow him to express his position on enemy strength estimates. Crile and I assured him that we would be happy to film whatever he had to say on this subject. That was the extent of the agreement. Neither Crile nor I made a guarantee to Graham to include any specific comments from the interview in the broadcast.

I also find it impossible not to challenge another of Graham's assertions: that there is "ample documentary evidence that the C.I.A. agreed with military intelligence on strength figures throughout the war." The general knows this to be untrue, as does everyone else involved in the bitter intelligence dispute between the C.I.A. and MACV during the summer and fall of 1967, and then again in the months after the Tet offensive.

The fact is, the C.I.A. first challenged the military's enemy strength estimate of 285,000 in May 1967 by publishing its own estimate of 500,000 in a report to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The C.I.A. then formally challenged MACV's numbers throughout the summer and fall in numerous and often bitter sessions of the National Intelligence Estimate Board in Langley, Virginia. This battle is documented in the Pike Committee hearings; in Tom Powers's book on Richard Helms, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*; and in the testimony of the many military and intelligence officers interviewed for "The Uncounted Enemy."

To suggest that this was anything but a full-scale confrontation between the C.I.A. and MACV is an attempt to rewrite history. Beyond that, Graham knows that the C.I.A. only *temporarily* gave in to MACV's intractable position. He knows that after the enemy surfaced at Tet, the C.I.A. reopened the Order of Battle dispute and once again supported its estimate of an enemy army in the 500,000 range.

So that there can be no question about these matters, I am sending the editors of *The Nation* several C.I.A. memorandums and cables directly pertaining to this controversy. These documents demonstrate how fundamental the differences were between the C.I.A. and MACV over the critical question of the size of the enemy the United States was fighting.

Mike Wallace
CBS News

UP THE VOLGA, DOWN THE RIVER

New York City

I write about the "Cruise Up the Volga" from August 5-21 co-sponsored by *The Nation*, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, Promoting Enduring Peace, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the World Fellowship League. At least an implicit purpose of the trip was to promote peace. Unfortunately, because of the way the tour was managed by the travel agency that arranged it, Anniversary Tours, I am skeptical that it served that purpose and believe that it may have been destructive to the cause of human rights.

The tour was to feature "nightly dialogue with leading Soviet and American experts on the politics of and prospects for nuclear disarmament." Before the departure of the tour, my colleagues and I at the Helsinki Watch Committee spoke to the American "experts" and to the member of the business staff of *The Nation* taking part. We urged them to contact members of the tiny, beleaguered independent peace group recently formed in Moscow, thereby demonstrating the interest of the peace movement in the United States and providing the Moscow group some protection against persecution. (A *Nation* editorial in the June 26 issue ["Very Civil Disobedience"], inspired by reports of a Soviet crackdown on the group, also urged Americans to protest.)

All those to whom we spoke expressed interest in contacting the Moscow group. Indeed, we were alerted to make these calls by one of the organizations sponsoring the tour, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which has been particularly vigorous in protesting the crackdown on the group. F.O.R.'s executive secretary, who took part in the tour, informed us that he had the address of Sergei Batovrin, the artist who organized the Moscow group, and that he planned to get in touch with him.

After the tour departed for Moscow, we learned that Batovrin had been taken into custody by Soviet officials, that he had been confined in a psychiatric hospital against his will and that drugs were administered to him. This happened on August 6, the day the tour was scheduled to arrive in Moscow.

It occurred to us that Batovrin's psychiatric confinement may have been intended to prevent him from being contacted by peace activists on the tour. Clearing dissenters out of the way when visitors arrive (as when the Olympics took place in Moscow) is standard Soviet practice. Accordingly, it seemed important to us to get in touch with peace activists on the tour. As it would be impossible to read about Batovrin's confinement in *Pravda* or *Izvestia*, we thought they might not even know of it.

One of my colleagues contacted Anniversary Tours to find out which hotel to call to reach a peace group activist to whom we had spoken about seeing Batovrin. The receptionist did not give her this information but switched her to a man who did not give his name. When she asked him the name of the hotel, he asked her to disclose the contents of the cable we would send. When she asked why he had to screen our message, he said he had to protect his tour and that he did not want to alienate the Russians. She said that our cable concerned some people we thought our contact would be interested in seeing. He said, "I bet I know what this is all about," and then told her that a U.S. peace group had called before we did to inquire about cabling its representative on the tour. He told her that she should look carefully at this "so-called" peace group; that she was probably misinformed about it; that such groups were not needed in the Soviet Union, which already has a peace committee with millions of members; that the Soviet people have plenty of opportunities to express peace sentiments; that the Soviet people are sincere in wanting peace because they lost 20 million people during World War II; and that the members of the independent peace group could join the existing Soviet peace committee. An independent peace movement is necessary in the United States, he told her, because our government's disarmament policies must be opposed. On the other hand, the Soviet Union's policy is correct, he said, and there is no need to protest against it.

The man from Anniversary Tours did not give her any address at which the participants in the tour could be reached, only the address of Intourist in Moscow. He told her that the tour had already left Moscow and would not return (the advertisement in *The Nation* indicated that it would return to Moscow for a final day of duty-free shopping and additional sightseeing).

We have been pleased by the support many U.S. peace groups have expressed for the Moscow group. They recognize that their cause would be advanced if such a group could function in the Soviet Union. In contrast, by frustrating attempts to inform visiting Americans about what happened to

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The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the first week in January, and biweekly in July and August) by Nation Enterprises and © 1982 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Tel.: 212-242-8400. *Subscription Mail Address:* Nation Subscription Service, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION.

The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Regular Subscription Price: One year, $35; two years, $65; six months, $17.50. Add $7 per year postage Canada, Mexico; $13 per year other foreign. All foreign subscriptions must be paid in equivalent U.S. funds. Claims for missed issues must be made within 60 days of publication date; back issues available $3 prepaid ($4 foreign). **Please allow 6-8 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries should be sent to: *The Nation,* Subscription Services, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305.

EDITORIALS.

Famous Victories

This spring and summer have been marked by war and claims of famous victories. Israel sent troops pouring across the porous border with Lebanon, proclaiming its goals to be the elimination of the threat of Palestinian terrorism and the creation of an "independent" Lebanon, free of foreign intruders. Britain sent its fleet to the Falkland Islands to teach the aggressor a lesson and to deliver the islanders from Argentine rule. The bloody brawl between Iraq and Iran flows back and forth across their disputed frontier, for objectives that grow increasingly obscure as the conflict drags on.

Now that the fighting has stopped, at least temporarily, in the Falklands and in Lebanon, it is appropriate to make a cost accounting. At a cost of more than a thousand British and Argentine lives, Margaret Thatcher successfully defended Britain's honor—and reclaimed islands it had all but abandoned during negotiations with Argentina a year before the occupation. Principle was salvaged, but now the Falkland Islanders must be protected at huge expense, at least until a decent interval has passed and a face-saving way can be found to hand them over to the country best positioned geographically to supply them—Argentina.

The success of Gen. Ariel Sharon's war against the Palestinians in Lebanon is also dubious. Israel's siege and brutal bombing of West Beirut, where a large civilian populace was bottled up, did more damage to its reputation than it did to the Palestine Liberation Organization—and provoked near unanimous condemnation at the United Nations. It is true that the P.L.O. is being dispersed

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throughout the Middle East, but in defeat it can claim a major political victory. Yasir Arafat boasts of having fought the Israelis for two months—longer than did any of Israel's other Arab opponents. Such a claim will strike a responsive chord among the Arab masses, to whom the guerrillas are heroes. And the adulation bestowed upon them will be a constant reminder of the hypocrisy of conservative Arab leaders who have expended so many empty words on behalf of the Palestinian cause. A new generation of Palestinians has been radicalized in the crucible of West Beirut, and it will prepare to fight a new generation of Israelis.

With the election of Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel to the presidency of Lebanon, it might be said that Sharon and Prime Minister Begin succeeded in one of their less-publicized war aims—that of expanding the authority of the Phalangist mini-state over all of Lebanon. If such is their idea of a free, independent Lebanon, we can only deplore it. A Gemayel presidency cannot serve the long-term security interests of the Israeli people, and it is certainly not in the interests of the Lebanese. Gemayel is a thug and a murderer [see Robert Friedman, "A Portrait of 'Free Lebanon,'" *The Nation*, June 19]. His "election" by the Lebanese Parliament was in reality a coup d'état. Many Moslems in the 99-member legislative body boycotted the vote, and so Gemayel's allies reduced the number needed for a quorum—on very dubious grounds—by calculating it on the basis of *living* members (several legislators have died in office). This collection of political zombies was elected ten years ago, and no longer reflects the views of Lebanon's Moslem majority. Gemayel bought off many of these representatives and threatened the lives of others. The key Moslem votes for him were marshaled by the conservative Shiite Speaker of the Parliament, Kamal Assad, and the quorum was achieved when Gemayel and Assad made it clear to the nineteen Shiite representatives from South Lebanon that their lives would be worthless if they did not vote for Gemayel. Assad also told them that Gemayel was the only person who could negotiate an Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

Gemayel finances his Phalangist militia through his control of Lebanon's hashish trade, worth $1 billion to $3 billion annually. He does not have the support of the majority of the Lebanese people, many of whom fear this self-proclaimed fascist will become a dictator. His election to the presidency under an antiquated Constitution that guarantees the dominance of the Maronite Christian minority leaves unresolved the root causes of the 1975-76 civil war. Lebanon badly needs a new constitution that would embody the one-person-one-vote principle. A national census should also be conducted, something the Christian minority has refused to allow since the 1930s. Until these elementary steps are taken, Lebanon will remain a social anachronism and an enclave of feudalistic privilege. The P.L.O.'s presence may have exacerbated Lebanon's chronic class and religious conflicts, but Bashir Gemayel is the last man to unite the country. Many Lebanese feel he has been imposed on them by Israeli guns, and thus he can only prolong Lebanon's agony.

My Week

Nancy Reagan's Secret Diary

(As told to Lila Trouvé, author of The Ella Raines Story, The Mona Freeman Story, The Gale Sondergard Story *and* My Story, *as told to Edna Sousé.)*

How true it is that we who live in the public eye often conceal a broken heart! And how ironic are the workings of fate. The same week that saw Ron's greatest triumphs as President dealt me the sad personal blow of the loss of my father. My heart is still too full to speak of it; suffice it to say that no girl ever had a better "Dad." But life must go on, and those whom the Director in the sky has chosen for the limelight must hide the tears they feel in their hearts. To all those wonderful people who sent me warm, heartening letters I can only say, "God bless you!" I only wish I could acknowledge them personally, but since the press of my public duties prevents me from doing so, I will reproduce a typical one, and let my thanks to the writer stand for my thanks to all the rest of you. The letter is from a little widow in Palm Springs:

> Dear Mrs. Reagan:
>
> May I express my condolences. I still remember, as though it were yesterday, the passing of my own father, Wentworth (Skip) Beaman II. He was kind, wise and lovable—everything a daughter could ask for. I remember best his funny ways—his grousing about "that man in the White House," as he called F.D.R., and his wise sayings, which I would like to share with you. "A gentleman never wears seersucker after Decoration Day" was one of his favorite remarks. And then there was "Women are like putters; they should be stroked, not hit." And "Sell on good news, buy on bad" (or was it the other way around?).
>
> Sarah Beaman Traymore (Mrs.)

How nice, for one in my position, to receive a letter of simple human friendship, instead of the usual demands from those who think the government is a free-lunch counter!

But let me turn to cheerier matters. As you no doubt read in the newspapers, during the week of August 16, Ron's tax reform program was passed by Congress, which is indeed good news for our economy. Immediately, interest rates went down, just like Ron knew they would, and Wall Street went wild with "joy unrestrained." I heard about the stock market's giddy rise while I was under the dryer watching *All My Children*, and the network broke in to give the news. As soon as I had finished, I hurried down to the Oval Office. Who should I run into on the way but Don Regan; our Secretary of the Treasury. Thinking that if anybody knew what was happening with the market Don would, I called to him. He was so excited he could hardly talk. Before I could ask him anything, he muttered something about finding a phone and ran off shouting, "Buy! Buy! Buy!"

When I reached the Oval Office, I was brought up short by the sight of Ron at his desk, surrounded by photogra-

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phers. Rather than go in and muss up his hair as I usually do, I stopped at the door to watch what was happening because, to be honest, Ron was looking awfully peculiar at just that moment. Really, I had to laugh. He kept picking up the phone, frowning and putting it down again. Lyn Nofziger, who was apparently directing the photo opportunity, was saying things like "Maybe if you put a little more disgust into it, Mr. President. Imagine you just ate a bad enchilada," or "Give me the knitted eyebrows, Mr. President." I asked an aide what on earth was going on, since Ron is usually *smiling* in these affairs. The man explained that Ron was just about to call Prime Minister Begin and tell him to stop bombing West Beirut. At last I caught Ron's eye. He waved, and then called out in his jocular way, "What's for dinner, hon?" When I told him, he quipped, "I think we'd better send out for corned beef from the Stage Deli," which broke everybody up.

As we were all laughing, Ron's secretary came in and said she had the Prime Minister on the wire. Ron immediately put on his stern face (if the American people only knew what a pro their President is!) and picked up the phone.

"Menachem?" he said. "How are you? . . . Shalom yourself. Look Menachem, Phil Habib says you're wrecking his negotiations. You've got to maintain the cease-fire. . . . No, I'm not asking anybody to get down on their knees. . . . No . . . wait a minute. Who was that? Menachem, tell Sharon to get off the extension. . . . Yes, Menachem. . . . Yes, general. . . . Yes, Menachem. . . . You are stopping the bombing, though. . . . Oh good. And no more cluster bombs, Menachem . . . Menachem?"

After he hung up, Ron did a few more takes until Lyn said it was a wrap, and then he broke for dinner. It was the first chance we'd had for just the two of us to have dinner in over a week. Because of the tax bill, Ron had been inviting all kinds of Republican Congressmen to the White House and having his picture taken with them. For days, we had Congressmen underfoot. I half expected to find one in my bathroom—most likely Jack Kemp, who seemed to be everywhere, smirking like the proverbial cat who has swallowed the canary. As if I didn't know what was on *his* mind. He thinks that the conservatives will dump Ron in 1984 because he abandoned supply-side economics, which is about the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. Ron never understood supply-side economics in the first place, so how could he abandon it? As for Mr. Kemp, there was something positively gauche about the way he kept patting the sofa cushions and measuring the drapes. When he asked me if the shelf in the Oval Office would hold his football trophies, I had to give him a piece of my mind.

Of course, politics makes strange bedfellows, but I must draw the line at that Tip O'Neill, whom Ron insisted on seeing after our little tête-à-tête dinner. When he arrived, shortly after 9, I could tell he had already taken a drop or two, as those Boston Irish say, and he immediately asked if we had any Jameson's. Then he waddled over to me, gave me a bear hug that about broke my ribs and told me an off-color story about a priest who met his bishop in a bawdy house—which I found in very poor taste. Then he and Ron started lowering the level of the Jameson's, so I slipped out and went to bed, only to be awakened around 2 by the strains of "Galway Bay" wafting up the stairs. When Ron came to bed, it was after 3. (I know the time because he knocked over a lamp and woke me again.) When I reminded him that he had an important Cabinet meeting at 8, he just laughed and yelled, "Kiss me, I'm Irish." Finally, I got him to bed, but it wasn't easy.

The next morning, he looked like Bela Lugosi, and I just had to say, "I told you so!" He was so grouchy all through breakfast that I said, "Those photographers should take your picture now." At any rate, he finally went down to the office, muttering, "Gotta stop arms shipments to China—but hang it, *which* China?" I assume he figured it out, for later that day came the announcement that we would stop supplying arms to Taiwan. Yet another momentous event in a very momentous week. I'll be glad to get back to the ranch—where there are no more Congressmen!

RICHARD LINGEMAN

CATCH-22, 1982 STYLE

As much as we admire the principled stand Benjamin H. Sasway (and Enten Eller before him) took against draft registration, we were also struck by a legalistic argument the defense raised during Sasway's trial last week in San Diego. Sasway's lawyer claimed that a letter his client had written to President Carter protesting registration technically fulfilled the law's requirements. After all, the government had his name and address.

The argument serves to highlight the bizarre logic of registration, which seems to have been borrowed from Joseph Heller's great war novel, *Catch-22*. We can imagine an elderly Doc Daneeka explaining the system to Yossarian's grandson.

"You see," Doc says, "registration tells the government where you are in case they want to draft you."

"So if I object to being drafted on moral or religious grounds I can be a conscientious objector?" Yossarian 3d asks.

"No, it's a registration, not a draft."

"But if I don't register, they can put me in jail."

"Right—if they know where you are."

"How do they find that out?"

"Well, they could get your address from Social Security or drivers' license lists, but if they did that, they would be admitting registration is a fraud. Or they could cross-index registrations with Internal Revenue Service lists, but that might be unconstitutional. So they wait for you to protest on moral or religious grounds. Then they prosecute you."

"So only those people who protest are prosecuted."

"Right. If you're moral enough to protest, you're immoral enough to go to jail. Catch-22."

"That's some catch, that Catch-22."

"Well, it's all they could think of."

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CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

Large contingents of Nicaraguan troops have been positioned along the border with Honduras in the northwestern department of Chinandega in response to a rising number of incursions into Nicaraguan territory by anti-Sandinist guerrillas. Although Nicaraguan officials will not comment on the size of the mobilization, a visit to the border area organized by the Defense Ministry confirmed that the Sandinists have beefed up their strength along roads and in towns that dot the mountainous frontier.

According to Vice Minister of Foreign Relations Victor Tinoco, more than 200 Sandinist soldiers and civilians have been killed in the last eighteen months—nearly half of them since the beginning of July. Most of the anti-Sandinist military activity has occurred along the Atlantic coast, but a wave of attacks in recent weeks has shifted attention to Chinandega.

On July 19, a light plane coming from Honduras flew over Corinto, Nicaragua's largest Pacific coast port, and fired two rockets that narrowly missed oil storage tanks near the docks. Later that same week, more than 100 uniformed men attacked the town of San Francisco del Norte, killing fifteen members of the civilian militia and kidnapping eight others. Survivors of the assault stated that Honduran troops and trucks were waiting across the border to pick up the attackers.

The day of the Defense Ministry's tour, shooting broke out near the town of Santo Tomás, where anti-Sandinist forces had earlier attempted to overrun a tiny garrison. By nightfall, scores of Sandinist troops in armored cars and East German trucks were streaming in from the border post of Somotillo to reinforce the town.

Tension is high in Managua. Government officials estimate that 4,000 to 5,000 ex-National Guardsmen are operating out of fifteen base camps in Honduras. Fears have been increased by the Honduran Army's recent decision to place its 20,000 troops on full alert, and combined actions by the Honduran Army and the *somocistas* are viewed as a distinct possibility.

High-ranking Sandinist officials have expressed bitterness at recent leaks from Washington that the State Department is considering military measures, including an air strike, should Nicaragua receive MIG aircraft from Cuba or the Soviet Union. Nicaragua's air force is the weakest in Central America, after that of Costa Rica, which has no regular army.

■ **The fate of American journalist John Sullivan has remained a mystery since he disappeared from a San Salvador hotel in December 1980. U.S. officials haven't given the case high priority, but a source close to the investigation said that "one of our most accurate leads yet" may help solve the case.**

Last June, the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador received an anonymous letter stating that "in a marked place there is buried a man with a North American appearance with nice clothes but without a head." The tip led investigators to the town of Nuevo Cuscatlán, approximately seven miles south of the capital. There, local burial records indicated that the body of an unidentified foreign male was found on December 29, one day after Sullivan disappeared, and was subsequently buried. After the body was exhumed at the request of U.S. officials, it was discovered that its head had been destroyed in an explosion and that its hands had been cut off, making identification almost impossible. Even the age of the victim could not be conclusively determined.

Clues to Sullivan's disappearance began to surface more than a year ago, in response to advertisements placed in Salvadoran newspapers by his family. In September 1981, *The Washington Post* received an anonymous letter from a man who claimed to be a member of a Salvadoran security force. The letter, which the newspaper never published, provided a description of Sullivan and of his personal belongings. The writer claimed that Sullivan had been arrested in the mistaken belief that he was a Belgian priest and that he had been tortured to death. A State Department official who has followed the case closely said it was a "plausible scenario" that Sullivan had been mistaken for someone else and then killed by people who "saw their mistake, and saw no other way out but to kill him."

Since the September 1981 letter arrived, Sullivan's family has learned that Father Rogelio Puncele, a Belgian who had worked with refugees in San Salvador, went underground several days before Sullivan's disappearance. He is now working with the guerrillas in Morazán province.

Another anonymous letter to the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, this one addressed to Ambassador Deane Hinton, arrived in December 1981. The letter, which State Department handwriting analysts say was written by the same person as the first one the embassy had received, offered more details about Sullivan's appearance: "He was tall, husky, had a beard, blue eyes, and a small scar on his hairy legs." According to Sullivan's sister, the last detail could only have been provided by someone who had seen the body. Sullivan acquired the scar after a motorcycle accident in 1974.

Although the Reagan Administration claims that it has followed leads in the case "without positive results," members of Sullivan's immediate family think there may be a cover-up to protect the Salvadoran security forces. "The things that seem so simple and obvious never get done," said Donna Igoe, Sullivan's sister.

An ironic footnote, involving the slain American missionary Ita Ford: Last year, Ambassador Hinton suggested to her brother Bill that because a trial was so unlikely, "extraordinary means" might have to be used to extract a confession from the National Guardsmen arrested for the killings of Ita Ford and three other Catholic churchwomen. When Ford asked Hinton if he meant that the United States should conduct or supervise torture, Hinton "suggested there was no other means of getting information," Ford said, adding that he found the prospect "sickening."

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Since we seem to be entering a period of rich man's government, it's clearly inappropriate that the affairs of the rich be open to overmuch public scrutiny. Small but useful strides are being taken in the right direction. The Burger Supreme Court, for example, seems instinctively to know its duty. Ever since the decision in *Branzburg v. Hayes*, which ruled that reporters had to disgorge notes and sources, there's been a detectable, if uneven, erosion of press freedom. In particular, the First Amendment has been diluted to the point where it can hardly be said to protect the *publisher* of an item or an opinion at all. And the definition of a "public figure" has been relaxed to the point where fat cats can claim the same protection as snail darters. The "trickle down" use of libel suits has, in consequence, become a handy weapon for the well-off. On many occasions, newspapers prefer to settle out of court, which is less newsworthy as well as less expensive. Those that take the braver route often end up like the *Alton Telegraph*, a small newspaper in Illinois which not long ago was forced to file for bankruptcy after being visited with punitive libel damages by a local construction contractor. One might have expected that a similar judgment involving the major newspaper in the nation's capital would have touched more hearts. But the recent decision against *The Washington Post* seems only to have ruffled its own composure.

Simply condensed, *The Post* reported that William Tavoulareas, president of Mobil Oil, had "set up" his son Peter in a business related to the oil industry and had made sure that it (the business) had prospered. Tavoulareas senior is, by any definition, a public figure. His little son is, by any definition, a nonentity. The law in its wisdom made it possible for the jury to award the *father* $2 million (plus punitive damages against the paper). The evidence, on whatever reading, did not warrant the finding of "reckless disregard for the truth" that such a verdict necessitates. One incidental consequence of the protracted lawsuit (libel cases make the chancery court in *Bleak House* look like an Iranian tribunal) is that *The Post* refrained for almost three years from scrutinizing Mobil. That kind of PR holiday would make it worth *losing* the case for many large companies. And, even without the temptation of vast damages, some corporations might be prepared to lay out a little venture capital just for a look at the reporter's notes—which the law now generously provides them.

The Scythian philosopher Anacharsis once wrote that laws are like cobwebs—strong enough to restrain the weak but too weak to hold the strong. It would be a pity if the First Amendment became cobwebbed. One thing that might help would be if newspapers that fancy themselves strong displayed more interest in protecting the weak. When Carol Burnett took the *National Inquirer* to the cleaners, *The Washington Post* gave this pompous editorial hostage to fortune:

> One publication has lost a libel case, just as other publications do from time to time, and it has lost it under a set of judicially created rules that gives writers and editors protection against all but the most egregious errors.

Ariel Sharon, the pacifier of Beirut, says that the United States government knew in advance of his military intentions. For some reason, the Reagan Administration doesn't welcome this aspect of the partnership. On August 12, replying to General Sharon's public claim, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger made this considered statement:

> Defense Minister Sharon did visit me in Washington on May 25, at which time he discussed the overall security situation as he saw it in the Middle East, using maps and charts. At no time did he imply that Israel was planning an invasion of Lebanon or considering any other military action.

Unless it means that Sharon told the Administration on some date other than May 25, that statement is a lie. Even if it were true, it would mean that Weinberger and many other people should be sacked as unfit to hold office. Consider the following. On May 16, Israeli Chief of Staff Gen. Raphael Eitan told the Israeli paper *Yediot Aharanot*:

> Since I've spent billions of dollars building an unusual machine, I can and must use it. They laid a mine and I may be in Beirut tomorrow. Now we're sitting and waiting. *I can't hide the troops.* [Emphasis added.]

This is only one of a series of public statements made by Sharon and Eitan about their intentions throughout that month. Since most of the armor of this "unusual machine" is American, and since, as General Eitan put it, modern spy satellites can read a license plate, there seems no reason to think that he was boasting.

No less telling is the evidence of *The Wall Street Journal*, which talked to General Sharon in the same week as Weinberger did. Introducing the extremely respectful interview, published on May 27, Walter Mossberg of *The Journal* said that the general "is making the rounds of several American news organizations during his current visit, apparently in an effort to make the Israeli case in advance of any potential fighting with the P.L.O."

The interview itself made that doubly clear. So when General Sharon said on Israeli television on June 16 that he "spoke above all about the problem of Palestinian terrorism, and the Americans understood that Israel had no choice but to strike," he was saying no more than the obvious. Why did it take almost two months before anybody got around to denying what Sharon had said? Was it because the operation got a little messy? Or was it because, as Dan Morgan wrote in *The Washington Post* on July 21, "The Pentagon receives detailed information from Israel on the performance of U.S.-supplied weapons, some of which the United States has never used in combat."

If Weinberger, Haig and Reagan did not know what was coming, they convict themselves of being the only people involved with the Middle East who didn't. When you reflect, it's rather ungracious of them to disown Sharon now. Without him, there would have been no evacuation of Beirut for Philip Habib to preside over so triumphantly.

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ARTICLES.

AFTER WEST BEIRUT. . .

Jordanians Ask, Are We Next?

MILTON VIORST

Amman, Jordan

Outwardly calm, even fatalistic, many Jordanians sense that their country is in the lee of a terrible storm, one which could strike from east or west and which might in an instant sweep it away.

But when I arrived here in early August, no one was minding the store. The King had taken the Queen to London for a holiday. The Prime Minister had gone off with his wife to a beach in Rumania. The Foreign Minister, too, was vacationing abroad. When I asked whether this was not unusual at a time of great international tension, I was answered with nervous, slightly embarrassed smiles. His Majesty always goes to London at the close of Ramadan, I was told. It is the holiday season.

Indeed, for the government, it was business as usual—and maybe even a bit less than usual. Despite the momentous dramas unfolding in Lebanon and Iraq, all of Amman's offices and most of its stores remained closed for four days after Ramadan. When the holiday ended, shoppers crowded the sidewalks and traffic jammed the streets. The restaurants and the movie theaters were busy. In casual conversations, people expressed their dismay at the bombings and the bloodshed, which had become regular fare on the evening news, but then turned to talk of the unseasonably cool breeze that had provided a few days' relief from the relentless desert heat.

The government's insouciance does have a positive side. A decade ago, King Hussein would never have left the country during a crisis. Now he considers his throne secure.

It is secure because he has worked hard at being a credible ruler, not only over the Jordanians but over the Palestinians who make up more than half of his kingdom's population. The Palestinians in Jordan are angry at the other Arab regimes for abandoning 600,000 of their people in Lebanon to the mercies of the Israeli Army. They readily denounce the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Libya, even Egypt. But I heard scarcely a word of criticism of King Hussein.

Nevertheless, by leaving Jordan, the King was admitting that he is impotent in the face of Israeli military power and that the Arab world is more fragmented than it has been in recent history. In London, Hussein saw Prime Minister Thatcher. He also received special U.S. envoy Philip Habib, who sought his help in mediating an end to the fighting in Beirut. But these were merely brief interruptions in the pleasures of an English holiday, not discussions of substance.

Israel's rampage through Lebanon has left the Jordanian government wondering what Prime Minister Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon plan to do next. Sharon has put forward a proposal calling for the replacement of the Hashemite monarchy with a Palestinian government in Amman. Although few Israelis take the scheme seriously, it has Jordanians worried. They point out that Sharon's projects, most recently the invasion of Lebanon, have a way of being realized, and they believe he would invade Jordan if he thought it necessary.

Mahmoud al-Sharif, the articulate editor in chief of *Al-Dustour*, a leading Amman daily, explained why Jordanians view Sharon's plan for an East Bank Palestinian state as a way of solving the Palestinian problem at Jordan's expense. "Sharon has never been restrained by cold logic or by political concerns," said Sharif, a Palestinian. "He is a man of crazy dreams, without a willingness to engage in give-and-take. He surely doesn't care what the world thinks.

"If he can march into Lebanon and announce that he will not leave until he sees a government of his liking there, he can do anything. Who can stop him from crossing the river and circling Amman? The Jordanian Army would put up a good fight, but he can do the same thing here as in Beirut."

Sharif told me that some Jordanian analysts regard Sharon's proposal as pure threat, designed to keep Hussein in line. It is not in Israel's interest to depose the Hashemite monarchy, they say, since a Palestinian state on the East Bank of the Jordan River would guarantee trouble for Israel. "It would become the focal point for all kinds of Arab revanchist movements," Sharif explained, "and would be easily allied with Damascus and Baghdad. Inevitably, it would be tough to control."

Many Jordanians believe that the ideal arrangement for both Jordan and Israel would be a West Bank-Gaza state for the Palestinians. Such a state, they say, would be squeezed between Hashemites and Zionists, and thus would threaten neither. But the Israeli government rejects this logic, and Sharon has said that he ordered the invasion of Lebanon to block the formation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank.

The real purpose of Sharon's threat, according to some observers here, is to frighten Hussein from involving himself in the debate over the Palestinians' future. Others say it is to pressure Amman into joining the Camp David talks, thereby legitimizing Begin's concept of autonomy.

But the most persuasive analysis I heard came from Minister of Information Adnan Abu Odeh, who was Acting Prime Minister while I was in Amman. Abu Odeh is well known among journalists for his intelligence and candor. Although Palestinian by birth, he has long been part of the Hashemite inner circle.

"I believe Sharon's proposal is meant to force Jordan to accept Begin's plan for annexing the West Bank," Abu

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Odeh said. "According to Begin, Israel wants only the territory, not the people. He wants to avoid having to grant Israeli citizenship to the Palestinians, with the right to vote and other privileges. But to treat them permanently as foreigners in 'Eretz Israel,' he will need Jordanian support.

"Jordan will be expected to keep supplying passports to the West Bank Palestinians. It will have to keep the bridges open over the Jordan River for more or less free circulation of people and commerce throughout the Arab world."

In other words, Abu Odeh said, Sharon is offering Jordan the choice of cooperating with Israel in its design for the West Bank or having the Hashemite state replaced with an Israeli puppet government. The invasion of Lebanon proved, he said, that Israel would stop at nothing to get its way in the region, including an invasion of Jordan.

Jordanians have little hope that the United States can modify the Begin-Sharon blueprint for the region, and they had no kind words for Habib's mission in Lebanon. Palestinians here consider him an agent of Israel, acting to get the P.L.O. out of Beirut without further casualties to the Israeli Army.

Abu Odeh, speaking for the government, dismissed Habib's approach as "crisis management" which avoids dealing with the underlying problems. He reaffirmed Jordan's refusal to admit any P.L.O. fighters, except the few who hold Jordanian passports, into the country. The Jordanian government believes that spreading the Palestinians around the Arab world simply prolongs the problem, he said; it would be better to resolve the situation now.

Indeed, the perception here is that Israel may have overplayed its military hand, thus making a West Bank-Gaza diplomatic solution more likely. Many Jordanians contend that, with the P.L.O. destroyed as a military force, Israel will no longer be able to claim that its security requires a continued presence in the occupied territories. Jordanians and Palestinians here agree that the time has come for the P.L.O. to advance the prospects for a comprehensive Middle East settlement by recognizing the state of Israel. Officially, Jordan says Washington was too hasty in dismissing Yasir Arafat's recent declaration to Representative Paul McCloskey that the P.L.O. supported U.N. resolutions affirming Israel's right to exist. But it is widely held that if Arafat seriously intended to imply recognition in his statement, he would have made it through official channels, and without equivocation.

For the most part, the Palestinian community here takes pride in the fight the P.L.O. put up in Lebanon. By the standards of past Arab performances, holding out for two months against the Israelis was a victory. I have heard the P.L.O. applauded not only for its military skill but also for its diplomatic finesse. Nonetheless, it is clear that the last chapter has not yet been written.

"If Israel goes into Beirut and destroys the Palestinian force there," Abu Odeh told me before agreement on the evacuation of the P.L.O. was reached, "only a more serious crisis will emerge. The Palestinian movement will still be alive, but we will have a new version of the P.L.O., without Arafat and the old leadership—more radical, more vengeful, less political, more dangerous."

Crown Prince Hassan, the King's brother, echoed this sentiment, and added that "the new generation of Palestinians, and I dare say of Arabs generally, will not be as reasonable" as Arafat's generation.

Hassan spoke those words apprehensively: like any monarchy, the Hashemites do not like radicals. What Jordan wants is agreement among the Arabs, to which the P.L.O. would subscribe, on a common negotiating position for talks with Israel. That would enable the King to play a central role in determining the future of the region. But there is no evidence that such a common position is possible or that the Israelis will negotiate. So the King vacations, and Amman is calm. □

THE JACK GREENBERG AFFAIR

On Cussing Out White Liberals

RANDALL KENNEDY

One of the most debilitating tendencies among black activists today is the indiscriminate "cussing out" of white allies. This tendency was evident in the controversy that recently erupted at Harvard Law School when two campus groups—the Harvard Black Law Students Association and the Third World Coalition—urged students to boycott a course in antidiscrimination law. The course is to be taught this winter by Jack Greenberg, a white attorney who has been director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund for the past twenty-two years, and Julius Chambers, a black attorney who is president of the fund.

The opposition to Greenberg's appointment stems mainly from the law school's failure to hire more minority professors. At present, there is only one black tenured professor and one black assistant professor. To the student groups, the fact that a white attorney was hired to teach antidiscrimination law—an area in which, not surprisingly, many of the finest practitioners are black—blatantly demonstrated the law school's unwillingness to create a racially diverse faculty.

The organizations, however, went beyond attacking Harvard's hiring policies. They also challenged the ability of a white professor to teach effectively a course in antidiscrimination law, and they challenged the qualifications of Jack Greenberg in particular. In its statement opposing Greenberg's appointment, the Third World Coalition declared: "It is extremely important that [the course] be taught by an instructor who can identify and empathize with the social, cultural, economic and political experiences of

Randall Kennedy, a recent graduate of Yale Law School, is a freelance writer in Washington, D.C., who has written for The New Republic, Harper's *and* Dissent.

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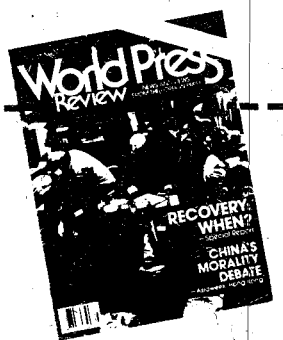

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the Third World community." The Harvard Black Law Students Association stated that the choice of Greenberg was "especially inappropriate" given what it termed his "adamant refusal to relinquish directorship of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to a black attorney."

These charges have a familiar ring to them. They are variations on a recurring theme—the festering conflict between black activists and white reformers over the role of whites in the struggle for civil rights. Some minimize this conflict or even deny that it exists. That was essentially the position Greenberg took in responding to the charge that he has refused to turn over his post to a black attorney: "It never has been seriously suggested," he wrote to the students, that he step aside in favor of a black.

However, the choice of Greenberg in 1961 to succeed Thurgood Marshall as head of the fund has long been the focus of criticism. As Louis Lomax recounts in *The Negro Revolt,* Greenberg's appointment struck a sour note with many blacks: "The argument invariably comes in these words: 'The Jews would die before they would let a Negro rise to the leadership of one of their organizations; so why should we let a Jew, or any white man for that matter, head our organization?'" Within the ranks of black attorneys, it has often been argued that the appointment of a white to direct the fund is a mistake that should be rectified. This resentment toward Greenberg is largely what fuels the suit recently initiated by the N.A.A.C.P. against the Legal Defense Fund to divest it of its right to use the initials "NAACP" as part of its official title. The views of the minority organizations at Harvard Law School, then, are not aberrational; they are widespread and deep-rooted.

But does all this justify the students' wholesale rejection of Greenberg? There are, to be sure, criticisms that can rightly be leveled against certain whites who proclaim themselves friends of the black cause. Some are able to work with blacks only in a leadership role. Others are only fair-weather friends. Still others invite skepticism by making excessive references to the aid they have rendered to black struggles. But criticism should take into account sensible distinctions. And, as I have said, the trouble with much of the cussing out is that it is indiscriminate.

I have often heard blacks say that white liberal hypocrites pose as great a threat to black advancement as overt racists do. With the latter one knows, as the saying goes, exactly where they're coming from. This is nonsense. The liberal hypocrite who cannot reject all forms of racism is clearly less of a threat than the reactionary who enthusiastically embraces white supremacy. There is, in other words, an important difference between Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Jesse Helms. The white liberal hypocrite is likely to be restrained by his rhetoric and inhibited by his conscience; after all, hypocrisy by definition implies allegiance to an ideal of behavior coupled with a failure to practice it fully. The hypocrites who figure so prominently on the enemies lists of those who despise white liberals *do* often fail to live up to the ideals they profess. But at least they are aspiring to a worthy standard.

In criticizing white liberals, it is also necessary to distinguish between liberal hypocrites and liberal heroes—those whites who have dedicated themselves to the struggle against racial oppression. From Wendell Phillips and Thadeus Stevens to Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner to Thomas I. Emerson and Arthur Kinoy, there have been whites who have seized every opportunity to enlarge the scope of freedom for blacks. Jack Greenberg belongs in this category. He has devoted his entire legal career to the fight against racism and has been a central figure in many of the epic legal battles of the civil rights movement, beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

It is precisely Greenberg's prominence as a civil rights champion, however, that aggravates some blacks. After all, they say, Greenberg has by no means martyred himself. Rather, he has profited from his association with the civil rights movement. Some even contend that he gained his prominence at the expense of black attorneys who never received credit for their contributions to the black rights struggle. These, too, are familiar complaints. They stem from the fact that disproportionate attention *is* paid to white advocates of black rights. One of the things that helped sour relations between black and white civil rights workers in the South in the 1960s was the media's penchant for highlighting the efforts of whites while relegating to the background the sacrifices of blacks. The death of a black activist in the cause of civil rights might occasion a brief mention in the establishment press. The death of a white would make headlines.

The difference in coverage can be explained, in part, by the public's understandable fascination with privileged people who take great risks on behalf of the oppressed. But it is mainly attributable to racism. In this country, white lives

DRAWINGS BY J.C. SUARÈS

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mean more than black ones. This ugly aspect of racism must be confronted and overcome. The best way to overcome it, however, is not by purveying a further distortion of reality—such as the notion that people like Jack Greenberg haven't helped and can't identify with our struggle.

White allies are not above criticism, but they should be criticized for their real flaws, not for specious ones such as having the "wrong" skin color. Furthermore, blacks themselves have reinforced some of the white attitudes they criticize. Blacks complain, for example, that white intellectuals exclude them from the mainstream of academic and political discourse. Yet, in all too many cases, black intellectuals and activists have ghetto-ized themselves by confining their interests to race-oriented issues and by disparaging the involvement of others with issues not directly linked to black rights. Feminism and the gay rights movement, for example, have frequently been denigrated by blacks on the grounds that these struggles—invariably described condescendingly as "fashionable"—siphon resources away from the fight against racism.

Such hostility is ill-considered. It increases our isolation, reinforces the belief that we are intellectually narrow and gives credence to the charge that we are nothing more than a typical interest group, selfishly grasping for all it can get and heedless of the obstacles others face.

It is also important to keep in mind that some of the attitudes of our white allies that have frequently been ridiculed are actually commendable responses to a racist society. Take white liberal guilt, for example, the butt of innumerable bitter jokes by blacks and whites. But what is wrong with feeling guilty about the role one's group has played in the subjugation of others, or with feeling uneasy about having benefited from wrongs done to others, or with feeling responsible for righting those wrongs? Of course, a commitment to social justice should not be based solely on guilt. But that does not justify the wholesale debunking of a quality of mind and spirit that inspires a sense of social responsibility within the white community.

The attempts of whites to gain acceptance among blacks are also often ridiculed. Whites are derided for seeking to learn about the ceremonies of black culture, for seeking to establish friendships across the color line, for seeking to show that they care about black people and want to help them in their struggles. Again, what is wrong with such conduct? Even when it is awkward and self-conscious, it represents a gesture of solidarity and respect. Certainly it is preferable to the neglect and unconcealed repugnance that are thriving under the aegis of Reaganism.

It is ironic that blacks' belittlement of their white liberal allies in many ways parallels the attacks on liberals launched by the right. Reaganites also disparage white liberal guilt, scoff at white liberal hypocrisy and claim that liberals insidiously mislead blacks about what their true interests are. This is an effective strategy. It makes reformist impulses suspect. It generates the cynicism and ill-will that nurture the politics of greed. And it stultifies the idealism that is necessary for a renewed campaign against the hatred and insensitivity that blight our society. Attacked from all sides, white supporters of racial justice begin to accept as true the charges flung at them. Having been repeatedly told that there is no difference between them and their racist or indifferent white brethren, many liberals lose the nerve and perseverance needed to sustain their commitment to the fight against racism.

These attacks, of course, are not the only reason for the falling away of white liberals from the struggle for black advancement. Opportunism is also an important factor. Indeed, some liberals are undoubtedly relieved by black rejection, for it covers their retreat from a battle they are tired of waging. Still, by criticizing white liberals unfairly, blacks are playing an important role in encouraging their retreat.

There are those who will argue that the black community's greater vulnerability in these reactionary times makes criticism (especially in publications read mainly by whites) ill-advised. This kind of claim, grounded as it is on the notion that criticism weakens rather than strengthens a community, is always suspect. But it is particularly mistaken now, precisely because of the ascendance of the right. We can no longer afford to gratuitously alienate allies or potential allies. Hence, when friends of racial justice are needlessly insulted, it is the duty of progressives—especially black progressives—to speak up.

Furthermore, as the Harvard controversy shows, abuse of white liberals diverts attention from the conditions that give rise to black protest. What prompted the black students' anger was the law school's failure to name more blacks to the faculty. Yet, in an editorial condemning the students, *The New York Times* never mentioned Harvard's hiring record. According to *The Times*, "black law students at Harvard are calling for a boycott of a course in race and legal issues because one of its teachers, Jack Greenberg, is white." This is merely half of the truth. The students' protest did involve an ill-considered attack on Greenberg. But the object of the protest was the stifling homogeneity of a law school faculty of more than seventy professors, of whom only two are black.

That protest was marred by a self-defeating and narrow-minded urge to cuss out whites. But any response to the students' demands that does not consider the larger context in which they arose is similarly narrow-minded. Racial oppression spawns problems of great complexity, and attempts to address them must be discriminating. One-dimensional responses cannot hope to alleviate injustices whose ramifications, unfortunately, seem endless. □

TRUE CONFESSIONS

"We're a bunch of radicals."

—President Reagan
(Speech to the National Catholic Education Association)

"I'm not an economist, I'm a Congressman."

—Rep. Jack Kemp
(Writing in National Review*)*

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THE ACID RAIN WAR

Reagan Inc. Dumps on Canada

ROBERT SHERRILL

Judging from the way they've conducted foreign affairs in recent years, our secretaries of state obtain much more satisfaction from getting bogged down in insoluble problems halfway around the world than they do in taking simple, relatively easy actions to improve relations with the nations next door.

If George Shultz fits the same old pattern, and so far he seems to, then we can expect him to use the troubles in the Middle East as a handy excuse to ignore our deteriorating relations with Canada. And if there is one item that stands out on the list of Canadian grudges against the United States, it is the one that has to do with that notorious vagrant, acid rain.

Admittedly, the intense feeling about acid rain stems from the fact that Canadians are going through one of those periods when, in their opinion, the United States can do nothing right. Just about the only things Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau has pushed in recent years that have won the support of most Canadians have been actions that made life much more uncomfortable for U.S. businesses with investments in Canada. All the economic ills Canada suffers are eagerly blamed on the United States. So, in this mood, it is very easy for Canadians to hate Yankee industrialists whenever another Canadian tree withers or another Canadian fish turns belly-up.

But the truth of the matter is, some of our smokestack industries—principally the giant utilities around the Great Lakes and in the Ohio River Valley—*are* doing long-range damage to Canada's forests and lakes.

The problem, as everyone must know by now, is that certain chemical pollutants are belched into the atmosphere and, after being carried away on northbound winds, mix with moisture and come down as acid rain.

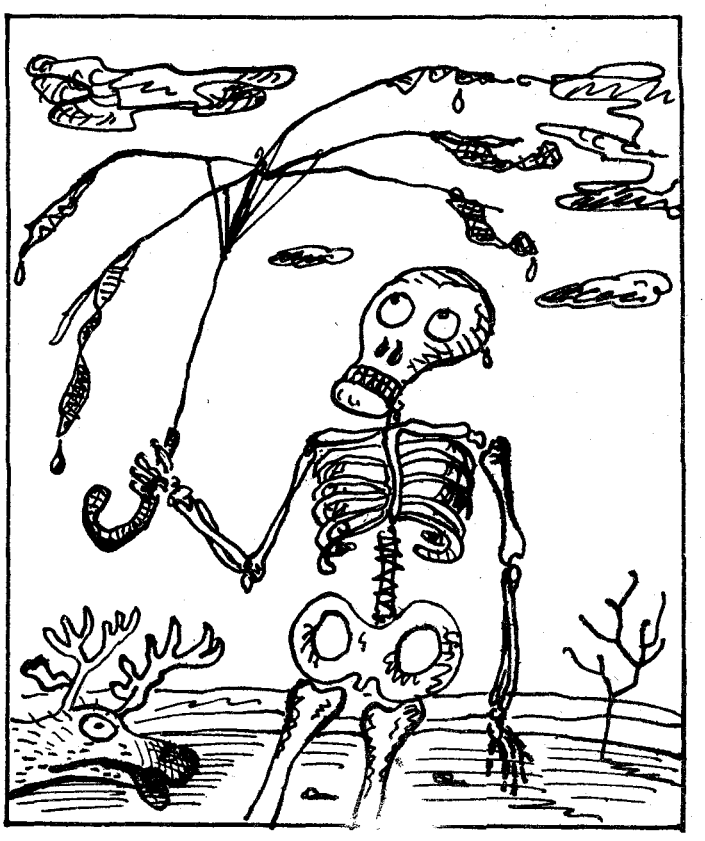
The problem got worse a few years back with the passage of clean air laws, which said that industries caught polluting the air would be fined. So, to avoid the local air monitors, coal-burning utility plants were equipped with enormously tall stacks that were efficient at launching the pollutants into air streams that would carry the evidence of the utilities' dirty work out of the country.

Some parts of our own country are victimized by this airborne dumping of chemical garbage. There are an increasing number of lakes in the Northeast—about 500 in the Adirondacks alone—where fish can no longer live. But in Canada, the threat is much greater, both to lakes and to forests. Acid rain appears to be doing to the Canadian lumber industry what the boll weevil once did to our cotton industry. Allan Gotlieb, Canadian Ambassador to the United States, has made the point with admirable restraint: "When one out of ten Canadians depends directly or indirectly on forests for his or her livelihood, any threat to those forests must be taken seriously."

Before Ronald Reagan arrived in Washington, some progress had been made in negotiations between the United States and Canada on setting up a program for coping with acid rain. In 1980, officials representing the two countries signed a "memorandum of intent" concerning transboundary air pollution. We could hardly have refused to work with Canada on the matter. After all, members of the Bilateral Research Consultation Group—scientific advisers to the two countries' negotiating teams—had estimated that, each year, U.S. industrial emissions of nitrogen oxides are eleven times greater than those from Canada and that three to five times more sulfur dioxide (the big villain) is transported to Canada from the United States than comes here from there. The bilateral agreement was full of specific promises: to step up enforcement of existing air-quality laws, to get some tougher laws moving through Congress, to apply stopgap controls, to establish working groups of Canadian and U.S. scientists, etc.

It sounded good. The trouble is, nothing positive has happened since. At least not on this side of the border.

When President Reagan met with Prime Minister Trudeau in Ottawa in 1981, he pledged to honor the memorandum of intent. But he lied. As people on both sides of the border are discovering, Reagan is an amiable madman on environmental matters. Canadian Minister of the Environment John Roberts complained to Lou Cannon of *The Washington Post* last year, "This administration is very



Robert Sherrill is a [illegible]*tion staffer on leave.*

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pleasant, and the people in it say soothing things to you when you tell them that American acid rain is destroying Canadian lakes and will soon be destroying [their] own. But they talk and talk, and nothing happens."

That isn't quite accurate. The Reagan Administration has done several things. It has moved swiftly to fill the air with more junk. Last year the Environmental Protection Agency officially closed its eyes to polluters by rubber-stamping the current permissible emission levels set by each state, thus allowing power plants and industrial facilities across the country to spew 2 million additional tons of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere in 1982. This year the E.P.A. released new regulations on so-called "tall stacks" that would exempt all but seven of the largest of these stacks from controls.

In a move that departed sharply from past practices, U.S. representatives demanded the right to *unilateral* review of scientific documents by a panel made up solely of Americans. According to John Marcum, assistant director of the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy, the group conducting the review will consist of *some* "experts on acid rain." But he admitted that "most of them" are not experts.

The Canadian government has expressed dismay over the assignment of acid rain research to the Office of Science and Technology Policy rather than to an independent group; the replacement of "pro-control" scientists in the working groups with others willing to toe the Administration's line; the rejection of Canada's offer of a mutual 50 percent reduction of sulfur dioxide emissions over the next decade; and the stony silence that greeted its proposed draft of an acid rain agreement.

Most irksome to the Canadians, however, is the Reagan Administration's claim that no action against acid rain is justified because nobody has actually proved which chemical pollutants are causing the damage.

Recently, Environment Minister Roberts said in New Orleans (Canadian officials are carrying their complaint even into the darkest corners of the nation), "There is no lack of scientific proof as to the causes of acid rain. . . . To procrastinate on the basis of a so-called lack of knowledge would be like hesitating to drain a malarial swamp because we didn't know precisely which mosquitoes were carrying the disease."

There is no sign that the State Department under Shultz will be any more responsive to Canadian concerns than it was under Alexander Haig's stewardship. The decision to treat Canada as a frivolous neighbor, one not to be taken seriously, could have consequences we will regret.

Indeed, Canada's new laws sharply limiting U.S. ownership of oil and gas companies in that country—laws that, however justified by nationalistic sentiment, certainly do not strengthen the hemisphere's energy position—are evidence enough that Canada is fed up with our heavy-handed neighborliness.

The tenor of U.S.-Canadian relations could turn on our government's willingness to get down to business on acid rain. If Shultz can be induced to focus on something close to home, perhaps progress can be made. We can only pray that Bechtel does not have the tall-stack franchise. □

DISARMAMENT AT THE U.N.

Why the Second Session Flopped

SUSAN JAFFE

No one at the United Nations promised nuclear disarmament at the end of the second special session on disarmament. No one promised a freeze or a reduction in the arms race, a halt in weapons testing or even just one less missile in a world of millions. In fact, in the five weeks of the conference, which took place thirty-seven years after the United States bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the arms race didn't miss a beat. While their representatives in New York talked about peace, the United States and the Soviet Union conducted nuclear tests. Not a single war was postponed out of respect: Margaret Thatcher concluded her business in the Falklands, Israel entered Lebanon and there was a scuffle in Southeast Asia. A week before the conference began, the Pentagon announced contingency plans for a five-year nuclear war and the State Department, under a provision of the McCarran-Walter Act that bans foreign visitors who advocate the doctrine of "worldwide communism," denied visas to 315 people who had hoped to observe the conference—including a retired NATO general who is now a member of the fledgling Generals for Peace and Disarmament and several Japanese atomic bomb survivors.

Obviously, the talks began under less than optimal conditions, and they deteriorated at such a fast clip that the good intentions expressed at the first special session on disarmament four years ago were almost swept away. The 157 delegations could barely muster a consensus on what had been agreed on in 1978. Where did they go wrong?

Last June, millions of people throughout the world attended huge disarmament rallies to show their support for the conference, and nearly all of the delegates referred to these demonstrations in their concluding speeches. But as the president of the General Assembly pointed out, "The problem clearly lies in the gap between what the peoples the world over want and need and what their governments are willing to do."

But what could their governments do? The most important item on the agenda was the drafting of a "Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament," a shopping list of goals without any timetable for implementing them. "The session was not convened in order to negotiate a ban on this [weapon] or that," according to Prvoslav Davinić of

Susan Jaffe covers nuclear issues for The Village Voice *and also writes for* New Statesman, The Boston Globe, Ms. *and other publications.*

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the U.N. Centre for Disarmament. "The purpose was to complete a strategy, to set the stage for disarmament efforts in the years to come. Then we know exactly the direction in which we have to move in order to stop the arms race. We don't have to discuss whether we negotiate this or that; no, everything is there and we simply have to negotiate."

Yet this proved too difficult. The delegates could not agree on what exactly they wanted. Should nuclear war be "eliminated" or merely "averted"? The text of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament contains alternate phrasings printed within brackets, with further brackets inside those brackets. The delegates could not even decide on the *order* of some paragraphs. Instead of an agenda, they produced a multiple-choice test.

The only tangible accomplishment of the conference—the establishment of a World Disarmament Campaign—came on the first day of the session, before the delegates had enough time to disagree. Funded by voluntary contributions, the campaign will "disseminate information [on disarmament] in all countries, in an objective, balanced, factual manner," according to Jan Martenson, Assistant U.N. Secretary General and head of the Centre for Disarmament. But since the member-states don't agree on what disarmament means, the campaign's efforts may turn out to be a waste of time. So far, India, Sweden and Finland have pledged to contribute and a woman from Connecticut sent a check for $2.

About seventy proposals, including seven versions of a nuclear freeze, died during the session. In the final week, India pressed for a vote on the freeze resolution it cosponsored with Mexico and Sweden. (In special sessions, resolutions are normally adopted by consensus, not by voting.) Thanks to the stonewalling of the American delegation, which is officially antifreeze, the vote was never taken. Many objected to a vote on the grounds that the countries possessing nuclear weapons were vastly outnumbered. Others feared the vote would be split along East-West lines. In any event, a vote would have been only a gesture, since a freeze must be negotiated, not voted. And, as Prime Minister Thatcher told the gathering, weapons don't cause wars, people do. Stopping the arms race won't insure peace. A former U.S. Defense Department official recently made the same point: There are enough rocks in the world to kill everyone on earth several times over.

The visits of Thatcher and more than fifty other heads of state attracted more media attention than the first special session on disarmament. But they may have done more harm than good by polarizing the meeting and raising the political stakes. Thatcher's analysis of human nature hardly helped the cause, and President Reagan didn't inspire a spirit of cooperation with his warning that the Soviet Union can never be trusted to stick to a treaty (this, on the eve of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. arms negotiations in Geneva). Prime Minister Menachem Begin, taking time out from his war in Lebanon, addressed an almost empty hall in what veteran observers described as the greatest snub in U.N. history.

After the heads of state put in their appearances, nearly empty halls became the norm. The few people who were in the audience when the Foreign Minister of Grenada spoke heard a stirring plea from a developing Caribbean country which is an innocent bystander to the nuclear arms race. The superpowers will spend $600 billion this year on armaments ($1 million a minute), he noted, which could pay for 600,000 schools, or homes for 300 million people, or 30,000 hospitals, or 20,000 factories or an irrigation system that would help provide food for more than 1 billion people. "Squandering resources of such magnitude on such unproductive and inhuman ends," he said, "robs man of the necessary tools to satisfy the demands of production for living rather than for death. . . ."

Less than a third of the delegates bothered to listen to the speeches of seventy-nine representatives of international peace groups who attended the conference as lobbyists for the preservation of civilization. The National Freeze Campaign, the War Resisters League, the United Presbyterian Church and 450 other nongovernmental organizations from forty-seven countries sent 3,391 representatives to the session. There would have been more had the State Department granted visas to members of groups from the Warsaw Pact countries.

But the peace groups could have stayed home. In addition to the tense international climate and the delegates' lack of cooperation, several countries threw obstacles in the path of progress. If there had been a general willingness to agree on disarmament measures, most of the obstacles could have been overcome.

The United States insisted that any arms-limitation agreements be monitored to guarantee absolute compliance

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and yet claimed (mistakenly) that there is no foolproof way of detecting every violation. The Soviet Union issued a no-first-use pledge, putting the United States on the spot to do likewise. But the United States was belligerent and refused to rise to the challenge. Several major powers were eager to recommend measures like nuclear-free zones for other countries but not for themselves. The Eastern bloc nations indicated a willingness to talk about a ban on nuclear weapons tests, but the United States had intimated during a meeting of the U.N. Committee on Disarmament in Geneva last spring that the Reagan Administration no longer considers a test ban a priority.

At particularly grim moments, both the United States and the Soviet Union said they preferred private bilateral talks anyway, a position that became "an incentive for playing a negative role" at the conference, according to one Western delegate. The two superpowers, in rare agreement, maintained that nothing could be achieved if every little country had to have its say. To them, disarmament is a job for the big boys. On the session's final day, a U.S. delegate referred to this "awesome task," saying, "Never have so few been responsible for the fate of so many."

The superpowers' noblesse oblige came with some reservations, however. "By agreeing to disarmament measures at the second special session," said a delegate from a Third World country, "nuclear weapons states would have been curbing their own political clout. And we haven't reached that stage of altruism in international affairs." Without bigger and better weapons, a superpower has no machismo and can get no respect. A ban on testing or research would mean the beginning of the end.

Given the high expectations at the outset, why was so little accomplished at the United Nations? "The United Nations is a tool for peace that has to be used," said Jan Martenson. "The United Nations itself has no supernational authority. . . . It is as strong or as weak as it is permitted by the member countries. It is not a monolith acting on its own; it is the collective will of member countries. And to exercise that political will requires determination." If anything, the major powers seemed determined to make certain that nothing happened at the conference.

On the final day of the session, the speeches were filled with confessions of "anguish," "disappointment," "sorrow" and "failure." Yet no one wanted to take responsibility for that failure. However, Edwin Feulner, a U.S. delegate who, as it happens, is also president of the ultraconservative Heritage Foundation, claimed that the United States "is proud of its record on disarmament," though he admitted that the goals of the conference remain a "distant and illusive dream." (Feulner's remarks were accompanied by laughter in the observers' gallery.)

As Sheila Oakes, a representative of a British peace group, angrily told reporters, "They were not talking about weapons but how to remove brackets from a piece of paper." But in the end they couldn't even do that. Disarmament is just too controversial. Though the future depends on it, no one knows how to take the first step. The world is too busy fighting to make peace. □

The Economy

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

porate profits are down, plants are shutting down and those still functioning are operating at two-thirds or less of capacity.

Our economy's disaster areas include the construction, steel and automobile industries and Detroit's satellite industries. Not even the large and powerful are exempt from disaster. This February, Laker Airways gave up the ghost and Sir Freddy's bustling image disappeared from the TV commercials. In Laker's train, Wickes Corporation, a huge retailer; AM International, maker of data-processing equipment; and Braniff Airways sought the refuge of Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Act.

In 1982, the Reagan Administration's year of reckoning, corporations that were expected to display their loyal support of the most pro-business Administration since that of Calvin Coolidge, not coincidentally one of Ronald Reagan's heroes, by buying new machines and gambling on novel processes and products glumly reduced their spending plans below Carter-era totals. Why add new plants when the customers can't afford to buy the products of the old ones?

For working Americans, things were of course worse. Under fierce corporate blackmail in the shape of credible threats to close plants, unions apprehensively surrendered cost-of-living increases, paid holidays, work-rule protections and health benefits that had been painfully negotiated with General Motors, Ford and their corporate peers in steel, trucking and other industries. For even a strong and progressive union like the United Automobile Workers, it was a no-win choice: immediate loss of jobs if the membership rejected give-backs, or job shrinkage in the future as employers substituted robots in steel collars for contentious blue-collar types prone to coffee breaks and grievances. Narrowly, G.M. workers endorsed give-backs in the knowledge that some of the savings in labor costs would be used to pay for the very machines that were virtually certain to supplant human operatives.

Particularly in the Northeast and industrial Midwest, states and cities are busy cutting one another's throats in the hunt for mobile enterprises. When a major bakery decided to move its operations to the borough of Queens in New York City, that metropolis's gain of 2,000 jobs was Chicago's loss of the same number. Deep recession compels politicians to play zero-sum games in which the gains of some cities and states are matched by the equivalent losses of others.

Under intense budgetary pressures, localities subsidize new employers with preferential financing, relaxation of zoning and environmental regulations, and an exotic assort-

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Robert Lekachman is a member of The Nation*'s editorial board. This article will appear as a new introduction to the forthcoming paperback edition of* Greed Is Not Enough *(Pantheon).* *Copyright © 1982 by Robert Lekachman.*

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ment of tax breaks. Enterprise zones, this Administration's favored tool for inner-city revitalization,[1] amount to an echo of Third World economic development—erosion or destruction of worker protections and environmental responsibilities that have been imposed with varying effects upon employers in the last twenty years.

As in Margaret Thatcher's England, the drift of events in Ronald Reagan's America is toward a society in which the rich wax richer and the poor get poorer.[2] One ought to be fair. There are some winners in the supply-side scam. In 1981, for example, the top executives of 288 large corporations surveyed by *Business Week* consoled themselves for the misfortunes of their employees and customers by increasing their own compensation by an average of 15.9 percent, comfortably above the year's inflation rate. There were equally cheery tidings for the leaders of the insurance industry, who in the same year collected salary improvements ranging from a mere 34 percent to an inspiring 49 percent.

Then there is the triumph, touted in Administration campaign commercials, of lower inflation. Of that "victory," three things need to be said. First, lower prices are cold comfort to the unemployed, to the men and women compelled to work part time at jobs well below their skill levels and usual incomes, and to the hordes of youngsters to whom society daily delivers the message, "Nobody needs you, nobody wants you." In the second place, inflation is always temporarily curable for communities willing to pay the price in unemployment, business failures, lost output and stagnant or actually declining standards of living. And finally, tamed inflation, acquired at such cost to vulnerable groups and communities, is transitory in the absence of firm controls over corporate price-setters and the flow of capital. For, when recovery finally arrives, prices accelerate, organized workers desperately negotiate catch-up contracts, which justify a new round of price hikes, and so on, as the familiar wage-price inflationary cycle re-establishes itself.

Sensible folks never expected Reaganomics to work. George Bush the Presidential candidate quite accurately labeled his future boss's economic nostrums "voodoo economics." It hasn't taken long for the all-out wager on sheer greed to be a dead loss. Reaganomics is a flat failure.

The consequences of failure have begun to register politically. In 1981, this Administration's twelve months of glory, Democrats were demoralized, community groups were stunned by the departure from the Senate of reliable spokesmen and labor unions were deprived of the committee and subcommittee chairmen with whom they had developed comfortable relations over the years. In their places were grim reactionaries: the Hatches, Quayles, Easts and Helmses.

[1] Liberals who in some cases have been indulgent to the notion might reflect that Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives have also embraced enterprise zones.

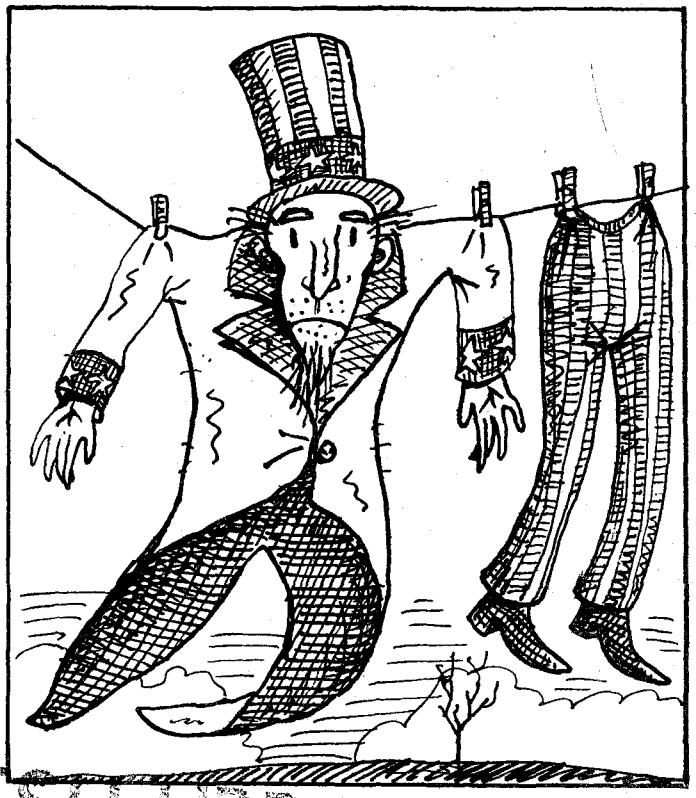
[2] Edwin Meese 3d, in heartfelt tones, described the progressive income tax as "immoral," a sentiment which accurately identifies this Administration's Social Darwinism.

This year is different. In the polls, the President's job rating drifts steadily downward. Once united behind a dominant President, Republicans have taken to quarreling among themselves in a fashion quite heartening to their Democratic opponents. Some indeed, the "gypsy moths," have been rediscovering affinities with liberal and moderate Democratic colleagues temporarily disclaimed in the wake of the Reagan "landslide."[3]

That Reagan is President of the United States constitutes a dangerous exaltation of image over substance. The good guy of countless B-grade movies, Reagan has presided over, if we are fortunate, our last national fling of nostalgia for the rugged life of the frontier, when men were men and women did the housework. But even in the shoot-em-up westerns there were always bad cowboys as well as good ones. Our chief executive in 1980 and 1981 apparently reminded his admirers of Alan Ladd and Gary Cooper. Right now, he looks more like Jack Palance. Bill Moyers's powerful documentation of the brutal impact of Reagan budget cuts on four families—broadcast on CBS in prime time—underlined the point that this is a President more likely to drive widows and orphans into the snow than to rescue them from foreclosure of the old homestead.

Notoriously, ours is a polity bereft of an organized political left. Nevertheless, we have had our socially innovative moments. They have occurred, most notably in the

[3] That landslide has always been a fiction. Confronted with the choice between Carter and Reagan, nearly half of the eligible electorate stayed home. Thus, although 51 percent of the voters chose Reagan, they amounted to a mere 28 percent of the electorate. A substantial number of ballots were cast in disgust with Carter rather than delight with his opponent. Wiser than their brothers and husbands, women split almost evenly between Carter and Reagan, out of intelligent concern over Reagan's bellicose anti-Soviet rhetoric.



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New Deal, when the adversities of the middle class generated a certain empathy for the misfortunes of those even worse off. Nineteen eighty-two is a year of middle-class disaffection. The politicians are listening, after all, to people who write letters, join community groups and contribute to campaigns.

Political ears perk up and political eyes focus when complaints and demands for immediate help arrive not from the nonvoting poor but from housing developers, dairy farmers, automobile dealers, old-age pensioners and other similarly respectable sources. As the Reagan Administration shoves the economy on the downward path pioneered by Margaret Thatcher, the elements of a new coalition become increasingly visible—farmers and small businessmen as well as union members and the working poor, Social Security beneficiaries as well as never-employed teen-agers, women as well as men, and whites as well as blacks.

It might appear that the opportunity for progressives—say, anyone to the left of Senator John Glenn—is substantial. Emerson's Law of Compensation encourages the hope that this most ideological of Administrations will evoke the mirror image of liberal, even, in American experience, radical opposition. Those who seek the grails of full employment, universal health protection, tax equity, workplace democracy and diminished inequality of income and wealth have solid reason to hope that 1982 and, still more, 1984 will mark a return to the best traditions of American egalitarianism and suspicion of entrenched wealth and power. One encouraging sign is the increasing rapport among major unions (notably the machinists, government workers and auto workers) and leaders of the Democratic left.

Less attractive possibilities may blight these hopes, however. The danger is real that the Democrats will misinterpret the lessons of recent political events and throw away a glittering opportunity. For the temptation to allow the Republicans to self-destruct is a powerful one for Congressional Democrats and the increasing band of Presidential candidates. Why endure the intellectual agonies and the internal party dissensions certain to accompany the birth of a sensible national agenda? Why not allow the calamities of Reaganomics to deliver a genuine liberal majority in the House of Representatives and even—long shot—return the Senate to Democratic control? In 1982 Congress, in 1984 the White House. By this reasoning, Congressional liberals like Ted Kennedy did neither themselves nor low-income Americans any good by supporting, in August 1982, a package of reduced food stamp, Medicaid and Medicare appropriations as the price of a number of equitable tax reforms and increases.

However, if the voters discern poverty of intellect and shallowness of program among Democratic paladins, they may stay with the Republicans, particularly those astute enough to distance themselves from the President and his more egregious deeds. Some Democrats have misread the morals of Jimmy Carter's defeat. Some of Carter's troubles were sheer bad luck, notably the second OPEC price coup in 1979, which sparked a malignant combination of unemployment and inflation, and the Iranian hostage crisis. But Carter lost the support of unions, minority groups and urban voters because, quite correctly, they suspected him of lukewarm attachment to the traditional Democratic emphasis on jobs and social services. Carter was especially vulnerable on the first score. He resisted mightily the Humphrey-Hawkins full-employment bill and signed it unenthusiastically only after it had been drastically diluted at Administration insistence. In a move whose consequences afflict our economy to this day, Carter made Paul Volcker chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, although he knew that Volcker was pledged to the tight money and high interest rates appropriate to true believers in Chicago-style monetarist theology. In the spring of 1980, the Federal Reserve, with the encouragement of the President, deliberately threw the economy into a brief but sharp recession.

Consequently, during the 1980 campaign, Carter laid himself open to an assault by Reagan from the *left*. Attacking Carter for high unemployment, Reagan cast himself in the universe of media illusion as a latter-day Franklin Roosevelt and his outmaneuvered sparring partner as a resurrected Herbert Hoover. It is fair to say that Carter failed *not* because he was too liberal but because he betrayed his own troops. In the 1976 primaries, he won U.A.W. support at crucial moments by promising comprehensive health care. He did not deliver. He pledged himself to high employment and rising real incomes. Instead: stagflation. Americans are compassionate toward Presidents who disappoint them (as too many men and women still appear inclined to forgive Ronald Reagan). But it is hard to sympathize with a President who fails because he has not really tried to keep his promises.

The neoliberals—Gary Hart, Paul Tsongas, Bill Bradley and Daniel Patrick Moynihan—interpret the 1980 election returns as a genuine shift to the political right. They appear to have accepted as fact the myth that Americans are disaffected from government, soured on social innovation and suffused with faith in the potential beneficence of the corporate sector. Their recommendations read like a humanized version of supply-side economics. Instead of subsidizing business indiscriminately in the Reagan mode, they are selective. They are inclined to abandon tax justice as a lost cause and experiment with such economists' novelties as a progressive consumption tax or a flat-rate personal income levy. Senator Dole this summer should have proved, to their embarrassment, that in the proper hands tax reform is politically viable. Although they worry far more than Reagan types about displaced workers and impoverished communities, they accept as irreversible the decline of old industries and the growth of new ones. But their approach is not to be confused with either traditional Democratic programs or an emerging agenda of social justice.

Let me hazard a pair of concluding guesses. For Democrats to steal Republican clothes, alter them modishly and present themselves as friends of business is tantamount to a recipe for alienating unionists, liberal professionals and minorities—without converting the corporate community.

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offered a "choice" between two parties equally vociferous in their praise of business, those who bother to vote are likely to disdain the converts and opt for ever-faithful Republicans.

My second guess is a corollary of the first one. Democrats will succeed in this decade by turning to the political left. The left will want redemption of old pledges of full employment and comprehensive health protections and a good deal more. The "more" includes public control of investment; Federal incorporation of large enterprises; political control over the Federal Reserve; dramatic, egalitarian tax reform; and legal restraints on corporate plant closings.

Great Society liberalism faltered for reasons more substantial than the personality defects of Jimmy Carter. It failed because Lyndon Johnson desperately endeavored to combine funding for a calamitous war with sustenance for his war on poverty. It failed because economic growth slowed, American goods became uncompetitive at home and abroad, and Johnson's political compromise—tax cuts for the prosperous and benefit increases for the poor—could no longer be funded without inflation.

Liberals and radicals should be clear about where responsibility for the unsatisfactory state of the American economy lies. Business has long been the country's dominant interest group. Today's economic failure is as much a corporate product as past success. Mainstream Democrats will surrender enormous political profit if they continue to compete with Republicans in rewarding the very people and enterprises most responsible for the poor economic record of the last decade and a half.

For the left, the next few years are an opportunity. They are also a period of great danger. Desperate politicians dispatch their fleet to the Falklands. At the time of this writing, the Reagan Administration has refrained from similar adventures in Central America. But the President, ominously, has begun to endorse, item by item, the program of the lunatic right: public school prayer, abortion bans, limitations of court jurisdiction over school integration and balanced budgets by constitutional fiat.

Time to hope. Occasion for despair. I am enough of an American to expect a cheerful sequel to the parade of horrors now on display in the Reagan era. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 162*)

Batovrin, Anniversary Tours has done a disservice to an ostensible purpose of the tour. Moreover, if we are right in speculating that Batovrin was confined to prevent him from meeting with participants in the tour, everyone connected with the trip should feel an obligation to work to secure Batovrin's release and to prevent Soviet authorities from engaging in further persecution of members of his group. In addition, we believe that anyone contemplating association with Anniversary Tours should be aware of its performance on this matter.

Aryeh Neier, Vice Chairman
Helsinki Watch Committee

MARXISM A POWERFUL TOOL?

Naramata, Canada

Alan Wolfe's article "The Penalty of Having Politics" [*The Nation*, June 19] says a number of things that demand comment. In attacking my article in *The Wall Street Journal*, he writes: "Most important, a commitment to Marxism is in many ways the first step toward a critical understanding of what went wrong in its name." Obviously, one need not be informed by a commitment to Fascism, Manichaeism, Gnosticism, Guild Socialism, Trotskyism or any other ideology or philosophy or social science to achieve "a critical understanding of what went wrong in" *their* name. In fact, such a commitment might well disqualify one from teaching a social science course, except in the Soviet Union, where a commitment to Marxism-Leninism is a prerequisite for teaching social science or anything else.

In contrast to Wolfe, I take my stand with Max Weber, who once wrote: "The task of the teacher is to serve the students with his knowledge and scientific experience and not to imprint upon them his personal political views . . . [W]henever the man of science introduces his personal value-judgment, a full understanding of the facts *ceases*." (Italics in original.)

Wolfe says that he teaches "Marxism sympathetically." I should hope that his sympathies do not preclude recommending that his students read unsympathetic critiques of Marxism by non- and even anti-Marxist scholars like Leszek Kolakowski, Kenneth Minogue, Lewis Feuer, Robert Conquest and others. Or could one argue that such scholars, absent a commitment to Marxism, would be unable to supply a critical understanding of Marxist reality?

Concomitant with "the increasing popularity of Marxism has come an increasing diversity in its meaning," writes Wolfe. A paragraph later he tells us that "all over the world, Marxism is taken seriously as a powerful tool for understanding modern society." How a doctrine whose meaning is growing increasingly diverse can be a useful intellectual tool is difficult to see unless, of course, Wolfe regards Marxism as a form of theology or, as Raymond Aron calls it, "prophetism." In fact, Aron has asked what accounts for "the Western obsession with Marxism" since major Marxist prophecies have been rejected by history?

Those who would like to read a more extensive examination of Marxism in our universities might turn to my article in the Summer 1982 issue of *Policy Review*, the Heritage Foundation quarterly.

Arnold Beichman

WOLFE REPLIES

Brooklyn, N.Y.

I tried to reach out over the ideological gap that separates me from Arnold Beichman to tell him that we have common cause to lament uninformed empiricism. His response is a lecture on value-free social science, peculiar from one whose writing is so much informed, as is mine, by deeply held values.

It does not occur to Beichman that Marxism is neither theology nor "prophetism"—though some use it as such. It is a method, which is why it can be both intellectually diverse and effective as a tool of understanding. Its powerful methodology surely explains why Kolakowski devoted three volumes to it and not to Manichaeism or even Gnosticism.

May I take this opportunity to point out that Michael Burawoy, the University of California at Berkeley sociologist whose tenure difficulties were mentioned in my article, has, on review, been granted tenure? By giving two examples from Berkeley, I did not mean to single out that university for condemnation, since there are a handful of first-rate Marxist scholars there. I used Berkeley, and Santa Cruz, as examples because of past affiliations with them. *Alan Wolfe*

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

From Washtub to Westinghouse

JACQUELINE JONES

NEVER DONE: A History of American Housework. *By Susan Strasser. Pantheon Books. 365 pp. $22.50.*

When sociologist Margaret J. Hagood interviewed white North Carolina tenant farm women in the 1930s, she found that many of them preferred worming tobacco plants or chopping cotton to doing household chores. Hagood's questions concerning field work often prompted responses like: "In the house you never get through," or, "In the field there's just one thing and you can finish it up; but here in the house there's cooking, cleaning, washing, milking, churning, mending, sewing, canning—and always the children—and you don't know what to turn to next." And yet, even though these women hated household chores and took pride in their ability to work "like a man" in the fields, their greatest sense of accomplishment came from rearing large families. Carried out with little cash and few conveniences, nurturing had its own special rewards.

Hagood's findings raise a number of questions about women's attitudes toward child rearing and task-oriented versus time-oriented labor, and about how these attitudes are shaped by class and race, time and place. How we as a nation have fed, clothed, bathed and generally taken care of ourselves—and the implications of these activities for family and community life—should be a basic concern for anyone interested in the evolution of our society. Yet most American historians—even those in the vanguard of the "New Labor History," with its emphasis on the social and cultural dynamics of work—have ignored the whole topic.

Indeed, until very recently, many scholars did not consider housework as work at all, despite the fact that, as Susan Strasser points out in this wonderful book, it is "the individual job done by more people than any other." For the most part, they have not deemed domestic labor worthy of serious study because most of the people who do it do not get paid for it. It is supposedly a labor of love. Housewives do not engage in collective action or form unions to advance their self-interest. Then, too, most scholars have been men, while housework has been performed almost exclusively by women.

Given the aura of sentimentality that surrounds domesticity, the publication of *Never Done* is an event of considerable importance. This is the first systematic overview of housework, and it provides much more than the title indicates. Strasser's great strength is her ability to link changes in private production and consumption to larger trends in the development of American capitalism. "The personal is the political," she reminds us: the way we wash clothes reflects national values and priorities.

Never Done advances two main arguments: first, that as housework became less physically arduous, it intensified the isolation of women in their own homes, and second, that corporations have intruded further and further into domestic life (through advertising and the mass production of goods from coal and oil to "convenience" and fast foods), pointing toward "the ultimate domination of the public sphere over the formerly private." The profit motive governing the distribution of consumer goods and services has profoundly affected gender and class relationships. When women ceased pickling and curing food and making soap, clothing and candles in their own homes and began to buy those things instead, they lost their hold on the productive economy, as it is traditionally defined. Poor people, of course, have been the last to benefit from the inventions that eased the burden of housework: the farm women interviewed by Hagood cooked, scrubbed and laundered without electricity or indoor plumbing.

Strasser strikes a balance between lamenting the breakdown of the collective ethos that once informed household duties, and helping us marvel at the magic wrought by the latest appliances. Her analysis of innovations in cooking and heating equipment, for example, reveals her ambivalence toward the evolution of housework. Thanks to improvements in oven technology—from the open hearth of the colonial era to the nineteenth-century cast-iron stove and the modern electric range—food preparation became steadily less time-consuming, less messy and less dangerous. Similarly, home furnaces and artificial illumination made cleaning easier and improved family health and safety. But, according to Strasser, when people lived "in space defined by its focus—the lamp or stove—rather than framed by walls," they "experienced family intimacy later lost in an age of central heating, electric lights, and television."

These same themes apply to the history of household water use. Lugging water from the backyard pump or nearby creek in order to wash clothes, dishes, bodies and floors entailed "staggering amounts of time and labor" (a single load of laundry meant hauling some 50 gallons of water—400 pounds!). Yet the advent of indoor plumbing meant that, "like food and energy, water had become a purchased commodity, controlled by municipal decisions and those of the manufacturers who produced plumbing parts on a mass scale." Automatic washing machines and dryers freed women from the tyranny of the elements, in the process "isolating women in their houses and denying them the companionship that had once enlivened wash days, compensating for the woes of the chore they hated most."

Efforts by early-twentieth-century female social scientists to "redeem woman's profession" paralleled changes in the structure of the paid labor force in the direction of specialization and rationalization. Thus, Christine Frederick, the homemaker's answer to Frederick Winslow Taylor, the father of industrial time-management, urged women to institute a "*habit of system and order*" in their domestic affairs. Among other helpful hints, she suggested that housewives keep elaborate systems of file cards: "then as a can of peas or peaches is used, it should be crossed off the list, so that at a glance the number of cans on hand of any particular product can be seen without poking around the storage and actually counting the cans."

Most proponents of "scientific" household management urged women

Jacqueline Jones teaches women's history at Wellesley College and hates housework.

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to devote their new-found leisure time to child care—which was itself increasingly portrayed as a science. Strasser quotes extensively from turn-of-the-century child-rearing manuals, including the popular Dr. Luther Emmett Holt's *The Care and Feeding of Children*, which warned mothers not to trust their own instincts when it came to nurturing. ("Babies under six months old should never be played with . . . and the less of it at any time the better.") A photograph of what appears to be a primitive set of boxing gloves is accompanied by the caption, "Aluminum mittens, recommended by early twentieth-century child-rearing experts to discourage thumb-sucking and masturbation."

Advertisers have rivaled the experts in their ability to induce guilt in American women. Strasser sums up the paradox of consumerism by noting that, while industrialization has "clearly improved the quality of life at home, eliminating back-breaking labor, raising standards of health and nutrition, and freeing people from virtual slavery to natural cycles," the market has recently eroded those standards by introducing unhealthful foods and by mocking "the values of love and community."

Strasser's analysis is compelling, but at times her arguments seem a bit too neat. For example, as Hagood's study suggests, child care and housework are very different things. Feeding a baby is not the same as scrubbing a floor, and a person might quite reasonably enjoy the former and loathe the latter. I wish Strasser had thought the distinction through; she might then have avoided conflating technological progress, whose blessings, however mixed, are undeniably real, with the constantly changing and frequently bogus prescriptions of child-care experts (think of the poor early-twentieth-century baby "raised by the book" and introduced to the mysteries of toilet training at the tender age of two months). We may want to trust "experts" to wash our clothes and prepare our meals—and Strasser's sympathetic discussion of Charlotte Perkins Gilman leads me to suspect that this is what she has in mind—while resisting their incursions upon our kids.

Strasser implies that we can have our cake mix and eat it too. She would have us enjoy technological advances in housework while simultaneously rediscovering the lost values of "love and community" that have fallen prey to the market mentality. But when did this harmonious society exist? Certainly, women have always depended on one another for companionship and help, but it is not possible to correlate family closeness with the use of candles, or the strength of women's bonds with the primitiveness of their cooking utensils. To take Strasser's point to its logical conclusion, we would have to believe that for American women the seventeenth century was a period of unremitting toil intermingled with an unparalleled spirit of neighborly generosity. In reality, however, New England villages had their own brands of social tension, manifested in continuous gossip and quarrels, and punctuated by the sporadic execution of witches and excommunication of heretics. Rug-braiding parties offered only partial compensation for a general atmosphere of Yankee crankiness.

Strasser's implied preference for the collectivization of housework is well and good; but at this point, communal arrangements lack a sponsor. The recent failure of the Equal Rights Amendment reminds us that the ideology of "woman's sphere" is still very much alive. For all the media fanfare about "liberated" husbands who pick up their own socks and concoct gourmet meals on the weekend, few households seem to be moving toward sharing the everyday drudgery of housework between marriage partners. Even fewer seem interested in communal cooking and cleaning arrangements.

Still, *Never Done* is a lively and provocative book, and it ought to attract a wide audience. It is richly illustrated with materials from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's impressive iconography collections, and it is full of fascinating lore, both about the ways household implements have shaped our daily lives, and the ways our daily lives are connected to broader trends in society and the economy.

For bringing housework into the light of historical scholarship, Strasser deserves to have her name become a household word. □

'Celie, You a Tree'

DINITIA SMITH

THE COLOR PURPLE. *By Alice Walker. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 245 pp. $11.95.*

As admirers of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and *Meridian* already know, to read an Alice Walker novel is to enter the country of surprise. It is to be admitted to the world of rural black women, a world long neglected by most whites, perhaps out of ignorance, perhaps out of willed indifference. The loss is ours, for the lives of these women are so extraordinary in their tragedy, their culture, their humor and their courage that we are immediately gripped by them.

Witness the opening passage of *The Color Purple*, a tale of violence, incest and redemption that starts out in Georgia in the 1900s and goes on for about thirty years. Beginning when her mother is laid up in childbirth, skinny, "ugly" 14-year-old Celie is repeatedly raped by the man she believes to be her father:

> Dear God,
> I am fourteen years old. I ~~am~~ I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me.

Celie, who retreats into an emotional numbness that will last for years, has two babies by her "father"; he gives them away. They end up in Africa with Celie's sister Nettie, who works for the missionary family that adopted them. (The novel is a series of letters, first from Celie to God, and then back and forth between Celie and Nettie.)

Celie is married off to Mr. _____, a downtrodden farmer who beats her. At night, she parts her legs for him and forces all thought and feeling from her body: "I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man."

Along comes Shug Avery, a blues singer of legendary beauty. Mr. _____ has been in love with her for years, and when she falls sick, he brings her home to Celie to nurse. Celie and Shug become friends and then lovers. Through Shug, Celie discovers that Mr. _____ has been intercepting Nettie's letters for several years. And from the letters, which Shug helps her obtain, she learns that the man who raped her

Dinitia Smith is a writer and journalist. Her first novel is The Hard Rain *(Dial).*

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wasn't her real father. Her real father had been lynched. With the stigma of incest removed, Celie finally stands up to Mr. _____:

> You lowdown dog. . . . It's time to leave you and enter into Creation. And your dead body just the welcome mat I need.

I wanted to cheer.

Celie goes with Shug to Memphis, and there she learns to live and love. When her "father" dies, she inherits his farm and returns to Georgia, where she sleeps in a room painted purple—for Walker, the color of radiance and majesty (and also the emblematic color of lesbianism). She is reunited with her children and Nettie, and, surprisingly, she befriends Mr. _____, who has been broken and humbled by Shug and Celie's joint departure. The end of the book finds Celie and her erstwhile tormentor sitting companionably on the front porch smoking their pipes, "two old fools left over from love, keeping each other company under the stars."

Walker can be a pungent writer. When Celie's father-in-law, Old Mr. _____, criticizes Shug, Celie, who has been sent to get the man a glass of water, overhears him:

> I drop little spit in Old Mr. _____ water. . . . I twirl the spit round with my finger. . . . Next time he come I put a little Shug Avery pee in his glass. See how he like that.

And sometimes she can break our hearts. When the aging Shug wants to have one last fling with a young man, Celie is so devastated she cannot speak. She can only talk to Shug in writing:

> He's nineteen. A baby. How long can it last? [Shug says.]
>
> He's a man. I write on the paper.
>
> Yeah, she say . . . but some mens can be lots of fun.
>
> Spare me, I write.

No writer has made the intimate hurt of racism more palpable than Walker. In one of the novel's most rending scenes, Celie's step-daughter-in-law, Sofia, is sentenced to work as a maid in the white mayor's house for "sassing" the mayor's wife. In a fit of magnanimity, the mayor's wife offers to drive Sofia home to see her children, whom she hasn't laid eyes on in five years. The reunion lasts only fifteen minutes—then the mayor's wife insists that Sofia drive her home.

The Color Purple is about the struggle between redemption and revenge. And the chief agency of redemption, Walker is saying, is the strength of the relationships between women: their friendships, their love, their shared oppression. Even the white mayor's family is redeemed when his daughter cares for Sofia's sick daughter.

There is a note of tendentiousness here, though. The men in this book change *only* when their women join together and rebel—and then, the change is so complete as to be unrealistic. It was hard for me to believe that a person as violent, brooding and just plain nasty as Mr. _____ could ever become that sweet, quiet man smoking and chatting on the porch.

Walker's didacticism is especially evident in Nettie's letters from Africa, which make up a large portion of the book. Nettie relates the story of the Olinka tribe, particularly of one girl, Tashi, as a kind of feminist fable:

> The Olinka do not believe girls should be educated. When I asked a mother what she thought of this, she said: A girl is nothing to herself; only to her husband can she become something.
>
> What can she become? I asked.
>
> Why, she said, the mother of his children.
>
> But I am not the mother of anybody's children, I said, and I am something.

Later, Nettie tells Tashi's parents that "the world is changing. . . . It is no longer a world just for boys and men," and we wince at the ponderousness, the obviousness of the message. At times the message is confusing, too. The white rubber planters who disrupt Olinka society also destroy the old (and presumably bad) tribal patriarchy. Does this mean the white man's coming is a good thing? I doubt it, but I was puzzled.

Walker's politics are not the problem—*of course* sexism and racism are terrible, *of course* women should band together to help each other. But the politics have to be incarnated in complex, contradictory characters—characters to whom the novelist grants the freedom to act, as it were, on their own.

I wish Walker had let herself be carried along more by her language, with all its vivid figures of speech, Biblical cadences, distinctive grammar and true-to-life starts and stops. The pithy, direct black folk idiom of *The Color Purple* is in the end its greatest strength, reminding us that if Walker is sometimes an ideologue, she is also a poet.

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Despite its occasional preachiness, *The Color Purple* marks a major advance for Walker's art. At its best, and at least half the book is superb, it places her in the company of Faulkner, from whom she appears to have learned a great deal: the use of a shifting first-person narrator, for instance, and the presentation of a complex story from a naïve point of view, like that of 14-year-old Celie. Walker has not turned her back on the Southern fictional tradition. She has absorbed it and made it her own. By infusing the black experience into the Southern novel, she enriches both it and us. □

Japanese Master

RICHARD HOWARD

SECRET HISTORY OF THE LORD OF MUSASHI *and* ARROWROOT: Two Novellas. *By Junichiro Tanizaki. Translated by Anthony H. Chambers. Alfred A. Knopf. 200 pp. $12.95.*

With this sixth (and seventh) work published in English, we begin to discern the coastline of that other Japanese archipelago, the works of Junichiro Tanizaki. The tale and the meditation which Anthony Chambers has so handsomely translated were written fifty years ago, after the publication of the author's first "Collected Works"—the twelve volumes of novels, stories, plays and essays of his first twenty years of writing. Even so, they predate the books by which he is known in the West—*Some Prefer Nettles*, *Seven Japanese Tales*, *The Makioka Sisters*. They stand—*Arrowroot* mild and maieutic, a kind of prolegomenon to any future storytelling, *Secret History* almost comic in its excruciating violence—as flags staking claim to a still unexplored continent, or, given the nature of the case, *in*continent. Coprophilia, a curiously lyrical theme sounded in all of Tanizaki's works, constitutes one of our clues. It is hinted at in the famous last sentence of his 1949 family chronicle, the Turgenev-like *Makioka Sisters* ("Yukiko's diarrhoea persisted, and was a problem on the train to Tokyo"). In *Secret History* it is given astonishing scope:

> Ladies born into a daimyo family were not only ignorant of money, they never allowed anyone to see their excretory matter, nor did they ever see it themselves. . . . There is a story of the beautiful Heian court lady who tantalized a suitor with a copy of her feces fashioned out of cloves. Discretion of this order was shared by all high-born ladies. In contrast, the modern flush toilet, while satisfying the requirements of hygiene, lays everything bare before your very eyes, and so, it must be said, is an ill-mannered, vulgar device, the designer of which must have forgotten that there is such a thing as decorum even when one is alone.

This is one of the mocking asides which accumulate, like the terrible series of severed heads and lopped noses, in this archive of imaginary documents in which horror story nests within horror story like a set of glistening Japanese boxes. But the violence, like Tanizaki's obsessive pursuit of an Ideal Mistress in her fecal prime, is offered as a kind of bribe to attend to the writer's real concern. It is the sensational sop to get past the Cerberus of amusement and into the region of Tanizaki's authentic preoccupation: how can a story be told? If there is no story, if there is only the prestige of an overpowering past and a prostrate present, how do you make one up?

Apparently you forge it. In his essay on Tanizaki, Donald Keene tells us that the preface to *Secret History* is "written in stiff, formal Chinese," and Chambers reports that two years before writing *Secret History*, Tanizaki translated Stendhal's *Abbess of Castro*, based on authentic Italian documents, into Japanese. These transformations and remodelings of sources and genres are crucial to Tanizaki's enterprise here: the permutation of what passes for history—prudish Confucian narratives and traditional Buddhist accounts—into a subverted world of demonic women and fetishized men. The year before he wrote *Secret History*, Tanizaki gave us his program:

> I am basically uninterested in politics, so I have concerned myself exclusively

Richard Howard's translation of Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du mal *was recently published by Godine. He is now at work on his eighth book of poems.*

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with the way people eat, dress, live, the standards of feminine beauty and the program of recreational facilities.

Not even such a determined aesthete as Tanizaki could suppose that he might *escape* politics, given such concerns. It is evident, however, that politics are going to be part of the presentation, not the "subject"—rather in the fashion of Borges, another nostalgic imperialist helplessly beguiled by violence.

In the beginning was the Parody: that might be Tanizaki's motto. In *Arrowroot*, a double journey—of a writer searching the wild mountains southeast of Kyoto for scraps of information about an imperial court that hid out there in the fifteenth century; of a failed scholar exploring the same region in quest of his mother and his eventual bride—is beautifully unrolled as a sort of epitome of all those scroll-romances. The perfectly placed episodes lead us further and further into the wilderness of bygones. The writer readily acknowledges himself overwhelmed by the past's authenticity: "I had so much material that my imagination would take care of the rest, even without a visit to the site: in fact, there are certain advantages to proceeding that way." The scholar in pursuit of his family romance confesses a similar disaffection for the *realia* of the journey: "In my case, the woman of the past who was my mother, and the woman who will be my wife in the future, are both 'unknown women' and both are tied to me by an invisible thread of fate—this state of mind is probably latent in everyone to a certain extent, even in those whose circumstances are different from my own."

Arrowroot, with its twin delvings into the vestiges of dynasty and of family, is a quiet hymn to mythmaking. Always (or at least in the seven books I have been able to examine—how I long for a larger sampling!) it is the *writing* which is left over, which therefore triumphs when mere truth gives out. *Arrowroot* ends with the inevitable confession of failure: that the truths of history (unless remade) are worthless, and that only the imagined—or imaginary—"life-truths" come to anything:

> I never wrote the historical novel I had planned; there was a bit more material than I could handle. But of course Owasa, whom I saw on the bridge that day, is now Tsumura's wife. The trip was more fruitful for Tsumura than for me.

These fictions, subversive and self-referential, join the already dazzling canon of Tanizaki's work in English, one so convulsive, the other so murmurous, but both wonderfully alike in their insistence that we know of the past only what we can imagine, just as we endure of the present only what we can connect. I believe they are masterpieces. □

Family Saga

JANE LAZARRE

RIVINGTON STREET. *By Meredith Tax. William Morrow and Company. 431 pp. $15.50.*

Rivington Street is the story of the Levy family, who in 1903 leave the pogrom-ravaged Jewish ghetto of Kishenev, in Russia, to make a new life on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. In particular, it is the story of three Levy women—Hannah, the mother, and Sarah and Ruby, her daughters—and of Sarah's friend Rachel, who moves in with the Levys after her father, an Orthodox rabbi, exiles her from home for flouting traditional ways.

For the women, life is an endless fight against anti-Semitism, poverty and injustice. But at the bottom of every other struggle is their fight for equality as women—against their fathers, their husbands and their male co-workers; against the rabbis, the bosses and the cops; against the unions and the socialists. From Kishenev to Rivington Street to Fifth Avenue, from right to center to left, this fight is the same.

Meredith Tax, a Marxist-feminist historian, is the author of *The Rising of the Women: Women in the Labor Movement.* In *Rivington Street*, she popularizes the same historical material as a family saga. The men, whatever their convictions, are hypocritical and arrogant in their attitudes toward women. Moyshe Levy, the father, loves the revolution more consistently than he loves his family—at crucial moments he simply is unavailable. Avi, Sarah's lover, is too involved with his political passions to understand intimacy or love. Sarah's and Rachel's male friends from the garment workers' union (the infant I.L.G.W.U.) support them when they strike against the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory, hail them as heroes when they are beaten, abused and jailed, but refuse them salaried positions in the union simply because they are women.

The historical sections of the novel are compelling, written with confident knowledge of how contradictory forces can come together in one moment, one

Jane Lazarre is the author of On Loving Men *and* Some Kind of Innocence *(both Dial).*

GETTING THROUGH

Winter begins with vows: crickets are gone
from the fields where worms are turning darker.
The soil creaks like a sleek new suitcase.
Church-bells; farmers seal up their windows—

I walk away from everything, head back
toward the clearing where my brother shot
a doe once; the snow's more settled here,
silencing the ground. Everything's as quiet

as when someone closes their eyes and chants
or rather counts, to a hundred, at the start
of a hide-and-seek. Bare trees
and sky. I linger by the frozen lake,

imagining a sound from a familiar piano—
I remember my aunt, propped up on her
hand-sewn pillows, frail, her blue
veins so swollen I almost see them break.

Ginny MacKenzie

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ent. There is a moving scene in which Sarah makes her first public speech calling for rights for women workers, and an effective description of the women's march of 1912. Tax conveys the ambiguities of social action without rhetoric or cliché—ambiguities which fascinate us because we recognize in them the complexity and challenge of life.

But she lacks that skill as a novelist. The major characters are provocative in outline: Hannah, the powerful matriarch, who saves her family from pogrom and poverty, shouting them into survival when nothing else works; Sarah, the father-identified daughter, wholeheartedly committed to the revolution; Ruby, the talented seamstress and designer whose worldly ambitions are a rebellion against being labeled "the dumb one" by her intellectual father; and Rachel, the young writer, running from the tyranny of her father's woman-hating Judaism to the tyranny of a traditional marriage to a wealthy gentile. But they remain one-dimensional. The minor characters are even flatter: there is The Fiery Young Organizer, The Pimp, The Uptown Bourgeois Feminist, The Useless Rich Woman, The Business Cheat, The Sexy Bohemian Painter. By contrast with the historical scenes, some of which are written with such simple power that I was nearly brought to tears, the emotional scenes leave the reader distant and disbelieving.

There is a need for popular novels that make feminist-socialist values accessible. Such novels, however, ought to touch the inner life of the reader, for that is where transformation takes place. What may make this novel popular, but not transforming, is the fact that short of death, none of the characters ever pay any real price for their choices. Even Moyshe, who is unreliable and self-involved for twenty years, is welcomed back unequivocally by Hannah when he finally learns his lesson. Nothing is permanently damaged, and nothing is irretrievably lost. All choice is between right and wrong, never between the right and another. Everybody wants different things, Tax says at the end, but we can all love one another and be happy. This is illusion at best—but also the formula for a marketable novel.

To its credit, *Rivington Street* records important chapters of history from the perspective of women, and it contains many memorable scenes and exciting descriptions. Spiritually transforming it

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may not be, but then one doesn't always read in order to be transformed. Sometimes one reads simply for fun and escape, and on those occasions it's nice to have feminist versions of genre fiction—murder mysteries with female detectives and sexist villains, for example, instead of the other way around. In that sense, it's good to have *Rivington Street.* □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Present Laughter

In the introduction to a volume of his plays published in 1933, Noel Coward writes that critics "search busily behind the simplest of my phrases, like old ladies peering under the bed for burglars, and are not content until they have unearthed some definite, and usually quite inaccurate, reason for my saying this or that."

I don't think this sort of critical rummaging in Coward goes on much anymore. Nearly ten years after his death, his reputation, having undergone wide swings, is fairly settled. No Wilde or Shaw by any means, but no British Neil Simon either, Coward can be seen now as a drawing-room wit with a sentimental streak or, alternatively, as a romanticist with an eye for human foibles. His wittiest plays are quite witty and will endure for the foreseeable future; perhaps for a shorter time, so will his apotheoses of British pluck and stamina, plays like *Cavalcade* and *This Happy Breed.*

Present Laughter isn't one of Coward's funniest comedies, though it's surely one of his most frenetic. Written in 1942, the same year as *This Happy Breed*, the play can be said to offer a counterweight, or a countering lightness, to the latter drama, which was moved by a spring of patriotism always coiled and ready in Coward. *Present Laughter* isn't patriotic; it isn't about any objective world at all, or any real society. A bedroom farce about the theater, it includes some autobiographical elements, drawing on Coward's own experiences as an actor, and offers a highly romanticized and hectic view of life in the spotlight. More than anything else, the play resembles some of the slapstick sexual comedies that Hollywood made in the 1930s.

The play is much too long and sags badly through most of its middle act. There are *longueurs* at other times too, when the intricacies of the sexual hatchings and cross-hatchings become more than one cares to sort out, or when the comings and goings—characters hiding in bedrooms or kitchens so as not to encounter other characters—aspire to Feydeu but fall seriously short. Having said this, I recommend seeing it.

George C. Scott has received much acclaim for his performance as Garry Essendine, an aging matinee idol around whom circle a host of admirers and predators, and for once in these days of hyperbole, the accolades are deserved. Scott is good, more than good; this veteran of innumerable hard-breathing stage and screen works briskly handles his far lighter role here and goes beyond it. What he does makes the production move and sometimes soar with comic spirit—what he does as an actor, that is. He also directed the production, and doesn't earn very high marks on that count. One is always hard put to separate actors' responsibilities from directors', but it's probable that Scott bears the onus for some wildly overblown acting—especially by Bette Henritze as a catatonic Swedish maid and Nathan Lane as a young playwright ferociously seeking Essendine's attention—and for some that is curiously pallid.

But Scott is something to behold. Groaning, sighing, grinning wolfishly, bursting into manic gestures, floundering around like a drunken, portly Romeo, striking Barrymore-like poses, addressing himself in the mirror as if he were the last sane person on earth, he achieves that rarest of histrionic feats: he triumphantly *holds* the stage. Behind Scott's characterization is a shrewd perception that Coward's work lends itself to interpretations that go beyond the text; more than any playwright of his genre, he provides rich materials for actors. Indeed, in this play he provides a specific theme—the tension between the conventions of bedroom farce and the possibilities of performance as art.

This is what I mean by Scott's going beyond the text. In his extraordinarily supple, robust and mock-agonized performance, he almost literally transcends his lines, transforming them from fairly traditional theatrical witticisms to revelations of human frailty. When, for example, he shouts, "I'm sick and tired of everyone lying and acting all over the place," the utterance is part of the "story," but he also makes it a comment on the lies of performance on the stage and in life. Scott has surpassed his own professional history, and the result is that Noel Coward has never been better served. □

ONE ENDING

No flowers grew over the tundra.
I couldn't forget what I learned in school
or sleep those nights I felt a cold insistence
near the bed, and heard sounds outside—
not of feet or wings, but what choked the air.
We were taught that the ice swelled far north;
its own weight bore it down to bury half
a continent before it stopped, and then a hard
unending season, worse than any winter,
settled in. I was sure I knew that land,
the things that roamed here then: mastodons
and gray wolves gutted my sleep.
Older, I grew less frightened. The massive
river of ice began to pull back; it leveled valleys,
kniving new rivers and streams, and dredged
impressions for the five I learned
by heart: Huron, Superior, Michigan,
Ontario and Erie. Later they filled with all that
meltwater I swam in summers, knowing
the cold waves. Now, when I look north
I see more hills and past them the lake.
Looking south, flat prairie:
the glacier stopped here and went back.

Jennifer Crewe

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FILMS.

KATHA POLLITT

The World According to Garp

I can't remember the last time I hated a book as much as I hated John Irving's *The World According to Garp*. It was arch, it was self-congratulatory, it was whimsical to the point of incoherence. And with all due respect to *Ms.* magazine, which has formally entered Irving on its roster of male heroes (along with professional nice guys Phil Donahue and Alan Alda), it is profoundly antifeminist.

Irving's feminists are self-righteous, humorless, sexless fanatics who wear uniforms (nurses' whites, in honor of Garp's mother, nurse-turned-feminist-writer-and-celebrity Jenny Fields) or become "Ellen Jamesians" and cut off their own tongues in a totally senseless protest of a little girl's rape and mutilation. The only feminist who is not crazy or boring or both is the transsexual ex-Philadelphia Eagle Roberta Muldoon—a man; the person most sensitive to women's situation is Garp—another man. Interestingly, despite Garp's concern with male violence, most of the violent acts in the book (and all the ones described in gory detail) are perpetrated by women against men: women stab, castrate and disembowel; Jenny Fields even commits a kind of rape, mounting a comatose quadriplegic in order to have a child without burdening herself with a man. Garp himself is murdered by a demented feminist too stupid to understand that Garp, who turns out book after book while also cheerfully handling all the housework and child care, was *on her side*.

Perhaps it was my dislike of the novel that made me enjoy the movie as much as I did. Certain of the book's more irritating themes—Garp's brilliance as a writer and his platitudinous sermons on the literary imagination—have been dropped. And certain of the book's more irritating characters have been made more human. In the novel, for instance, Jenny is a brisk, domineering, literal-minded flake, who thinks that "male lust" is the cause of all women's troubles because she has never felt lust herself. As played by the lovely, gifted Glenn Close, Jenny is still a flake, but she has a heart, too: her scenes with little Garp and, later, with Garp's ill-fated

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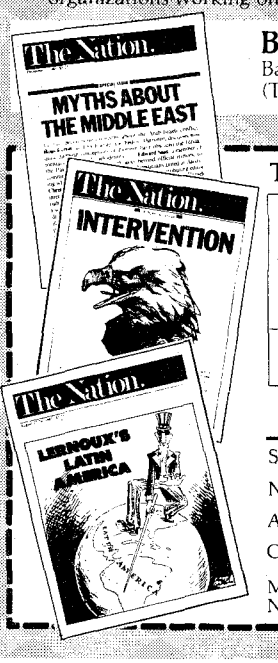

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children radiate with motherly warmth ("You'll like being old," she tells her younger grandson. "They'll call you 'Old Man Walt' ").

Although I suspect that the movie will be hard to follow for a person unfamiliar with the book, director George Roy Hill and scriptwriter Steve Tesich have done as well as anyone could in condensing Irving's long and plot-crammed novel. The story and characters have both been radically simplified, and while the results don't make much sense as a narrative, the episodic, bouncy quality that was one of the book's chief charms for its fans has been admirably translated to the screen, where it really *is* charming. The title sequence—naked baby Garp being tossed toward the sky in slow motion to the tune of "When I'm 64"— is a wonderful touch, conveying far less sappily than the book the brevity, unpredictability (that laughing baby, of course, never will be 64) and joy of life. Garp's imaginative development is handled lightly and without pomposity: in a clever cartoon sequence, the little boy's crayon drawings of his dead father, resplendent in a flier's dashing scarf and helmet, come alive; later, a surreal fantasy sequence shows us teen-age Garp transmuting into a short story a street scene involving a piano dangling out of a high window and a couple quarreling on the ground.

Hill and Tesich have played Garp's story as sunny farce. The crazy violence from which Garp tries, in vain, to protect his family is dramatized not by rapes and child knifings but by an airplane coming out of nowhere to crash into the tidy little suburban house that the Garps are thinking of buying. ("Do you mind if I use the telephone?" asks the unscathed pilot.)

But the sunniness makes for problems. In the book, Garp has his dark side: he has a writer's brooding vanity; he seduces a bevy of star-struck baby sitters; the very urgency with which he watches over his children and his marriage drives everyone up a wall and is partly responsible for the car crash in which one of his sons is killed, the other mutilated, and his wife, who is performing oral sex at the time, bites off her lover's penis. In the movie, Garp's sense of doom is conveyed primarily by heavy-handed shots of ocean surf, home of the dreadful Under Toad, as his smaller child calls the undertow.

As Garp, Robin Williams is half St. Francis of the Suburbs, half great big friendly dog. He positively beams with love—for his wife, Helen (played by Mary Beth Hurt as a bookish pill), his pink-cheeked sons, his writing, his wrestling and his mother. In the movie, the baby sitter (there's only one) seduces *him*. She has to: Garp is a man whose idea of an evening out with Helen is to park outside the house and watch the kids inside; who tells her that despite his literary success, he has only two natural talents—wrestling and "being a family man."

Remarks like that perhaps account for the look of perpetual annoyance on Mary Beth Hurt's face—or maybe it was my face. Williams's Garp is *so* adorable, innocent, warm, funny and nice, he is *such* a wonderful father, competent househusband and fabulous writer, poor Helen can hardly compete. No wonder she goes off for steamy tête-à-têtes with her sexy younger man while Garp plays knights-in-armor with the kids and checks on the pot roast in the oven. It's her infidelity, too, that brings disaster; Garp's was just a fling.

Dustin Hoffman, move over. Like *Kramer vs. Kramer* and *Author, Author*, *The World According to Garp* is a hymn to Dad. In the old days, Father knew best; now he also cooks, cleans and loves the children best. Helen doesn't desert her kids, like the wives in *Kramer* and *Author*. But she does have a career, and in the world of movies that means she can't really be a Mom. We hardly ever see Helen caring for her sons or playing with them; Garp's "real *family* project," a Christmas book to be written and illustrated by himself and the boys, has no role for her. Roberta Muldoon (amusingly played by John Lithgow as an amiable giant in drag) needed surgery to acquire feminine virtues; Garp, while retaining his anatomy intact, manages to be at once the best man and the best woman in the film.

In the end, *Garp* drowns in its own winsomeness. It wants so much for you to like it, it does all but climb into your lap and ask for a kiss in baby talk. Everything is played for giggles: Roberta and Garp are forever hugging each other so that the audience can enjoy the joke of a huge woman clutching a smaller man—or for sniffles: when Jenny, walking toward a helicopter, fails to hear Garp's farewell, we *know* we've seen the last of her even before we see Garp looking wistfully out to sea. Feminism is just another gag: "He

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touched me! He touched me!" shrieks a tearful woman when Garp brushes against her accidentally; "Baby! You found me!" cries a battered wife when her husband tracks her down at Jenny's house. Roberta and Garp exchange glances: Women. Go figure them.

I leave it to the social scientists to decide what the current vogue for Father-is-best movies means, given that in real life men do very little more housework or child care than they did in the 1950s. Is it a reproach to working women? (You see how warm and wonderful that domesticity you walked out on can be, if only you were as competent and loving as your husband, poor fellow.) Or is it perhaps an instance of that strange phenomenon often noted by anthropologists whereby *whatever* task a man performs is perceived as more important than whatever task a woman performs? Maybe the people who make movies are simply so in love with the vision of happy, white, freshly bathed American kids saying cute things over a steaming home-cooked meal that they will even let Dad do the housework rather than question the notion that The Family is the only refuge from a senseless, violent world. *Garp* doesn't deserve its R rating. It really is family fare. □

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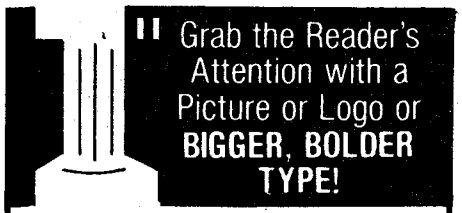

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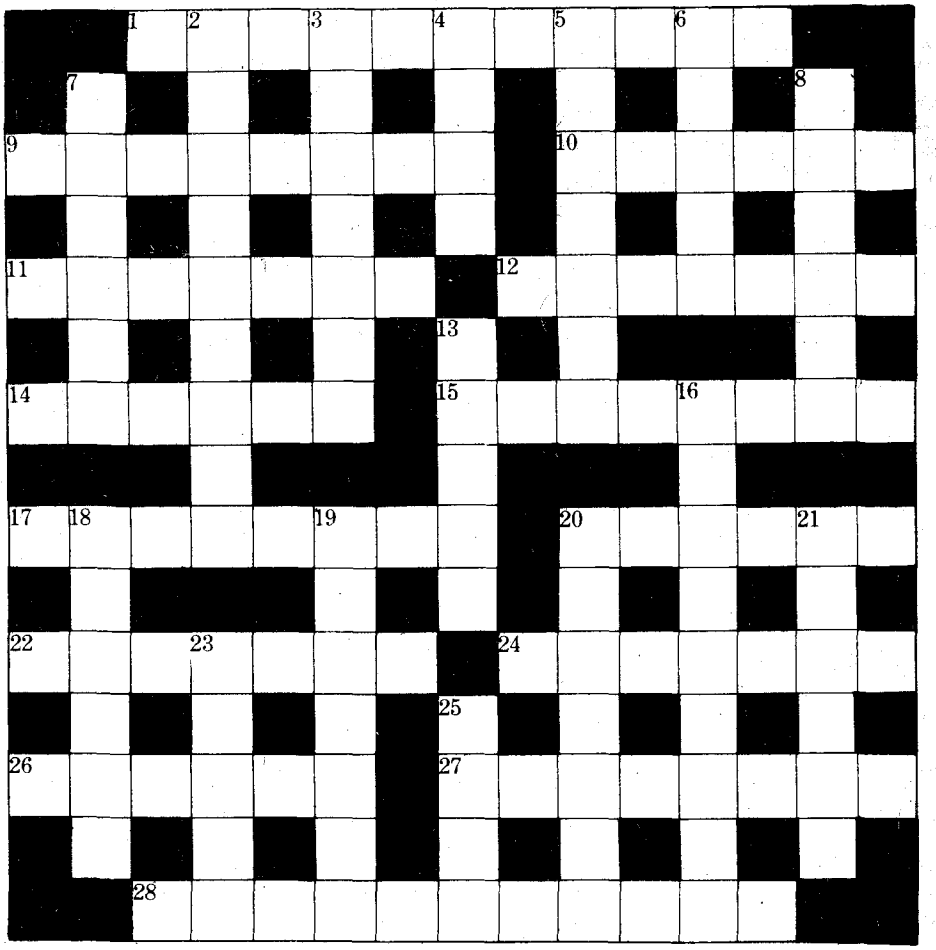

ACROSS

1 See 20 down
9 One sort of laid the plot of this tale around the eastern Mediterranean. (5)
10 Auto users having been shaken up, it might come in handy if the suit is successful. (9)
11 A 23 doesn't leave much this way. (7)
12 A fellow allowed something to go to his head, perhaps. (7)
13 Is obviously in charge, but draws the line someplace. (5)
14 Seems to suggest the crew should be skilled. (9)
16 What the unannotated version has, as one on the spot might tell the reporter. (It sounds like know-how in France!) (2,7)
18 The Spanish leader and the English leader shortly will have a drink, perhaps. (5)
19 Descriptive of the London Underground? (7)
21 The start gets more confused as it discloses the proposition. (7)
22 Study one's position before driving the lake, possibly. (9)
23 Otherwise Treves should obviously make an effort! (5)
24 One expects to hear them in every row, taking ages with press material. (5,8)

DOWN

1 One has to be quick to read it, so the reader finds it's about someone else. (8,6)
2 Pertaining to letters—the old-fashioned kind. (9)
3 The commerical offer doesn't last with chickens, as they say. (7)
4 Mentioned as being placed, by the sound of it. (5)
5 Descriptive of such as the *Constitution*—or would Boone be more logically associated with it? (9)
6 Make a fresh attempt out of what's left with the painting. (7)
7 What the runner may do second, perhaps, sounds like iron in a modified form. (5)
8 They can't be made with 16, the nasty type being not part of the barber's conversation. (7,7)
14 You'd better have it when going under the bridge—spy work may demand it! (9)
15 Bring up to date, being mined with zero complications. (9)
17 Force used only in emergency? (7)
18 Makes a secret mixture. (7)
20 and 1 across What a limbo dancer probably does, and goes to great lengths to satisfy one. (5,4,9)
21 To which arms are reputedly piled. (They're cut relatively early.) (5)

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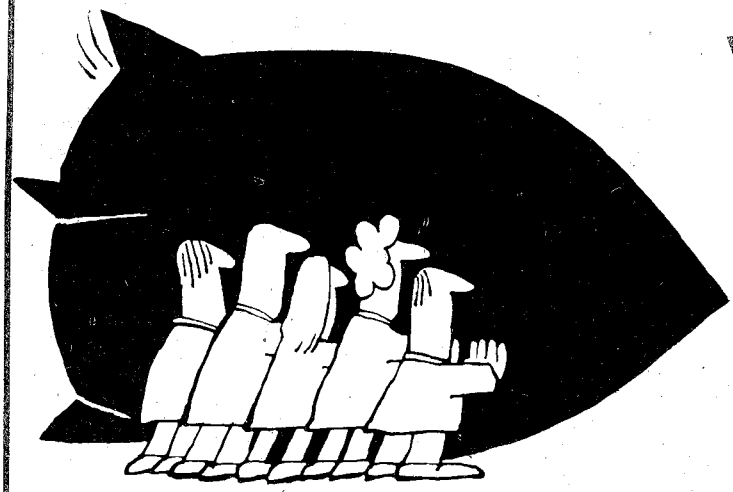

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Wednesday Nov. 10—Leave New York City (evening)

Thursday Nov. 11—West Berlin—*American/NATO decision to deploy Pershing 2 and cruise missiles on European soil*: Briefing by NATO staff (evening)

Friday Nov. 12—West Berlin—*Response of the Peace Movement to Rearmament*: Lecture, slide show, discussions and workshops (morning & afternoon)

Saturday Nov. 13—West Berlin—*City Politics and Community Organizing in Berlin*: Alternative bus tour of city with lecture and discussions (afternoon)

Sunday Nov. 14—East Berlin—*History of Fascism*: Visit to Sachsenhausen concentration camp (morning); *Politics of Peace in the German Democratic Republic*: Visit with government representatives (afternoon)

Monday Nov. 15—Dortmund—*East/West Trade, the Gas Pipeline Deal and U.S. Foreign Policy*: Visit turbine or pipe factory (afternoon); viewpoints of Industry, Labor and representatives from the foreign offices of West Germany and the Soviet Union (evening)

Tuesday Nov. 16—Dortmund—*Nuclear Power and Alternative Energy*: Visit nuclear power plant at Hamm (morning & afternoon); Green Party, ecologists and alternative economists (evening)

Wednesday Nov. 17—Cologne—*War & Reconstruction*: Slide show and lecture on WWII bombing raids (morning); walking tour of old section of the city (afternoon)

Thursday Nov. 18—Bonn—*Disarmament Politics, Parliamentary Parties and the 1984 Federal Elections*: Talks and discussions with Christian Democrats (morning), Social Democrats (afternoon)

Friday Nov. 19—Amsterdam—*Disarmament Politics and Parliamentary Parties in Holland*: Talks and discussions with Workers' Party, Christian Democrats, Pacifist Socialist Party, Communist Party-Netherlands (afternoon)

Saturday Nov. 20—Amsterdam—*The Peace Movement and Alternative Politics*: Representatives of various social movements (afternoon)

Sunday Nov. 21—Return to New York City

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